

Israeli jets raid Lebanon

TYRE (AP) — Israeli warplanes struck suspected guerrilla bases in southern Lebanon Friday following suspected attacks on Israeli outposts. Three activists were reported killed. Guerrillas of the Syrian-backed Amal group carried out the attacks on Israeli and allied positions in the Israeli-occupied border enclave early Friday, Lebanese security officials said. In Tel Aviv, an Israeli army spokesman said three guerrillas were killed in the fighting. He did not identify their group. Amal, however, denied any of its fighters were slain. In response to the attacks, two Israeli jets fired two air-to-surface missiles on a valley between the villages of Toulun and Kabrigha, 23 kilometres southeast of Tyre, the officials said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. There was no immediate word on casualties from the 7 a.m. local time air raid on the area, which is believed to be used by Lebanese guerrillas as a base to launch attacks on Israeli troops and their allied Lebanese militiamen in the occupied zone.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الراي»

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Volume 24 Number 7000

AMMAN SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1998, SHA'BAN 2, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Israel implements pullout under Wye accord

JENIN (AFP) — The Palestinians took control of more of the West Bank Friday for the first time in two years after Israel pulled its troops out of a first stretch of the territory in line with last month's Wye accord.

Four days late and one month after the accord's signing in Washington, Israel carried out the first of three promised withdrawals from the West Bank in return for tougher security guarantees from the Palestinians.

On Friday Israel handed over civil authority an additional two per cent of the West Bank covering some 110-square kilometres and 28 small towns, villages and hamlets around this northern West Bank town.

In addition, Israel surrendered security control to the Palestinians in a further seven per cent or some 385-square kilometres of the West Bank.

The Israeli authorities also released 250 Palestinian prisoners and signed a protocol allowing the long-awaited opening of the international airport in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the Wye accord.

But the formal hand over of the West Bank territory did not go entirely smoothly.

A last-minute disagreement over the exact areas to be handed over was only resolved after Israeli and Palestinian officials flew to the southern West Bank town of Hebron for consultations with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

A signing ceremony was delayed for several hours after Palestinian police commander Haj Ismail Jaber accused the Israelis of handing over less territory than they had said they would in trips given to the Palestinians the previous day.

But other Palestinian officials were less critical of the revisions saying the area evacuated was not smaller, just different to what had been expected.

Arafat gave his approval to the revisions after an hour-long meeting in Hebron with Jaber and Moshe Yaalon, the Israeli commander of the central region.

Amid great fanfare, Palestinian police took over Qabatiya, the largest town to be evacuated by Israel as part of the military withdrawal, witnesses said.

Ten Palestinian police vehicles drove down the main street of the town of 11,000 south of Jenin holding aloft pictures of Arafat and waving black-green-

red and white Palestinian flags.

The convoy was led by Jaber and was pursued by Qabatiya residents running behind the vehicles and cheering the arrival of the policemen.

Hundreds of mainly male residents turned out to greet the convoy and a dozen local inhabitants fired shots from Kalashnikovs and M16 assault rifles.

"I am very happy to be in my uniform in this Palestinian town. Today is like a festive holiday for us," said Walid Abu Dahab, a Palestinian police officer from Jenin.

Israeli soldiers had earlier set up new signposts delimiting the new borders with the autonomous areas.

The signposts carried messages in Hebrew and Arabic saying: "Warning, you are entering an area controlled by the Palestinian Authority."

Elsewhere Israel freed a first batch of 250 Palestinian prisoners in Gaza, Hebron, Ramallah and Jenin in accordance with the Wye peace accord, witnesses said.

The Wye agreement requires Israel to release 750 prisoners in three batches of 250 over three months.

The Palestinians have protested against Israel's inclusion of common criminals among those to be freed, saying that only political prisoners should be counted towards the requirements of the Wye agreement.

Israel and the Palestinians also signed a protocol allowing for the opening on Tuesday of Yasser Arafat International Airport at Dahaniya in the southern Gaza Strip.

The first plane to touch down is due to come from Egypt followed by four others, all of them due to arrive on Tuesday, from Morocco, Jordan, Spain and the Netherlands, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

A sixth will be sent by billionaire Saudi Prince Walid Bin Talal, the news agency said.

With Friday's redeployment in the West Bank, the area under complete Palestinian control has risen from three per cent of the territory to ten per cent.

A second pullback is due in four weeks time and a third in 12 weeks.

If Israel goes through with all three redeployments, the Palestinians will end up controlling, either wholly or partially, 40 per cent of the West Bank compared to 27 per cent before the agreement.



A Palestinian policeman holds a picture of his President Yasser Arafat as he enters in Qabatiya in the West Bank on Friday as Palestinian police took over the town, the largest to be handed over by Israel as part of its military withdrawal from the West Bank (AFP photo)

Orthodox Church prays for King's safe return

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Members of the Orthodox Christian community in Jordan Friday prayed for the safe return home of His Majesty King Hussein at a special mass at the Church of the Redeemer in downtown Amman.

Speaking to the congregation and offering wishes for the swift recovery of the King were Chairman of the Arab Orthodox Society Raouf Abu Jaber, Orthodox Bishop in Amman Silvestros Farr and head of the society's youth Hatham Fanek.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh returned to Amman following his visit to the U.S. where he met with His Majesty. Tarawneh said upon arriving in Amman that the Monarch's treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma will end by mid-December. Tarawneh said the King will

then convalesce before returning to the Kingdom towards the end of December.

The prime minister discussed with King Hussein a ministerial statement that the prime minister will submit to a joint session of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament on Sunday. The Constitution requires holding such extraordinary parliamentary session in case of the King's absence from Jordan for more than four months.

The premier said he listened to the King's directives with regard to various issues concerning Jordan and that the Monarch expressed thanks to all Jordanians who visited him. Tarawneh said the King is in constant contact with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, who keeps His Majesty informed of various local and regional developments.

The prime minister said he submitted to the King the gov-

ernment's statement that he will read at Parliament introducing the 1999 budget as well as the Speech from the Throne that the King delivers at the opening of Parliament's ordinary session in December.

According to Tarawneh, King Hussein has been keenly following up on the implementation of the Wye River accord in which he had played a key role, noting that he was satisfied with the recent conclusion of the Turkish-Syrian standoff and the end to the U.N.-Iraq crisis.

Tarawneh said he met several U.S. administration officials in Washington and discussed Jordanian-American economic and trade cooperation and U.S. aid to the Kingdom. He also called on the administration of President Bill Clinton to give due attention to the question of Jordan-Palestine trade, as Jordan is intent on opening markets for its exports.

Negotiations for Aqaba Railway concession to get on track

By Ghadeer Taber

AMMAN — The government and an American-led consortium will begin negotiations Sunday on a concession for the Aqaba Railway Corporation, Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi said Friday.

Defence and engineering giant Raytheon, working with American firms Wisconsin Central and General Electric, and Mitsubishi of Japan, CCC contractors of Greece, as well as the Amman-based Kavar group, submitted the highest of four offers for the 25-year concession and the assets of the Aqaba Railway Corporation, he said.

Raytheon's offer was a lump sum of JD20 million.

The concession will include operation and maintenance of the Aqaba Railway Corporation, financing and construction of rail extensions to the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company at Shidiyeh and between Aqaba and the Aqaba industrial area (Wadi II) on a build, transfer and operate (BTO) basis, according to ministry officials.

Official and industry sources estimate that the planned expansion will eventually cost between \$100-120 million, to be paid by the concessionaire.

But according to the tender's terms of reference, the highest price offer does not guarantee that Raytheon automatically is declared the winner.

If the government and Raytheon do not reach a deal within one month on the

terms of the concession and the conditions for transporting rock phosphates, the government will then initiate negotiations with the second highest bidder. Omnitrax of the United States, which submitted an offer of JD15.3 million.

The transport ministry also received offers from San Francisco-based Bechtel, and SNC Lavalin of Canada, with an offer of JD1.5 million. The ministry did not open Bechtel's financial offer because it failed to submit a bank guarantee as required by the terms of the tender document.

The four companies had submitted technical proposals earlier in July, qualifying them for the final round. Those offers were submitted Wednesday.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, the main customer of the state-owned railway, could be a partner, with up to 24 per cent equity, in the newly-privatised company, in line with a government decision taken a month ago.

The Aqaba Railway Corporation, which has a JD70 million debt that will be absorbed by the government, provides rail services from phosphate mines owned by JPMC at its southern sites of Abiad, Hassa, and Shidiyeh for export through the Red Sea port of Aqaba, mainly to markets in Asia.

But Shidiyeh mine is not served by rail and the service is provided by a trans-shipment facility.

The new expansion and rehabilitation of the track is

expected to increase the amount of tonnage of phosphates transferred annually from 2.5-3 million to between 5-6 million tonnes, bringing in much needed hard currency for the treasury.

While the newly-built infrastructure will eventually revert to government ownership, the assets of the company will be on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis, according to ministry sources.

Besides the highly successful 33 per cent sale of the Jordan Cement Factories Company to Lafarge of France, breaking a privatisation dry spell, the transport sector has emerged as the mainstay of the government's privatisation agenda, a major part of the country's reform programme with the International Monetary Fund.

Unlike the aborted privatisation of the Jordan Telecommunication Corporation, the sale of mainly indebted state transport sector assets has proceeded smoothly.

The indebted Public Transport Company, undergoing liquidation, has sold off its bus concessions to the private sector. (see related story on p. 3)

The ministry has also recently received 35 expressions of interest for the construction and operation of an electric commuter train between Amman and Zarqa.

The government has also begun legal and financial restructuring of Royal Jordanian in preparation for the sale of a major stake of the heavily indebted air carrier in the international market.

U.N. inspectors work, Iraqis enjoy weekend break

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.N. weapons teams carried out field inspections Friday while Iraqis, relieved that the threat of U.S. air strikes was over, flocked to outdoor markets, amusement parks and picnic grounds.

The inspectors' working on a weekend is a change of policy. Traditionally they took Fridays off. But Caroline Cross, spokeswoman for the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) that oversees disarmament efforts, said teams would work seven days a week in the future.

"We want to get on with things and get as much done in as short a period of time as possible," Cross said.

At least three U.N. vehicles left the headquarters compound on the edge of Baghdad. The inspectors refused to talk to reporters, and Cross would not say where they were going.

But the inspectors were believed to be checking the monitoring equipment they had installed at known weapons sites before the recent crisis.

The more contentious inspections — when the U.N. experts make surprise visits to sites where they suspect evidence of banned weaponry is hidden — are not expected until next week. The inspectors must certify that Baghdad has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction before the

U.N. Security Council will lift the punishing trade sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The inspectors resumed work on Wednesday, a day after they flew back from Bahrain, where they had gone early last week amid fears of air strikes.

The United States and Britain had threatened to use force if Iraq did not reverse its decisions in August and October that effectively put an end to inspections.

Iraq backed down last Saturday, pledging full cooperation with UNSCOM in a letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has said he will maintain forces in the Gulf to ensure Iraq follows through.

On Friday, the relief was tangible among Iraqis who crowded Baghdad's mosques and strolled in its many gardens and parks.

"Life is again normal and we can live," said Nawal Jamil as she walked with her husband and three children at Al Zawra park in Al Mansour neighbourhood. Bakr Al Samarra, the preacher at the Abdul Kader Al Jallani Mosque, had a similar message in his Friday sermon: "We thank God that the crisis ended."

(Continued on page 12)

Sale of 33.3% of cement company to Lafarge to be concluded Sunday

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC), the government's investment arm, on Sunday will formally conclude the sale of a 33.3 per cent stake in the Jordan Cement Factories (JCF) company to the French giant firm Lafarge.

Trading of the company's shares on the Amman Financial Market (AFM), suspended October 14 to help the government negotiate the terms of the sale, will also resume Sunday.

The deal, which was negotiated last month, cuts the government's share in the blue-chip firm to 16.5 per cent and gives the government a badly-needed cash injection of JD72 million.

Once trading resumes, demand for mining shares in the AFM is expected to increase, a broker said.

A communiqué by the Jordan Securities Commission, which was made available to the Jordan Times detailing the terms of the agreement, said the price of cement shares will be "floated" in the first 30 minutes of trading Sunday, and the price reached during this period will be considered the opening price.

According to the terms of the deal, the French firm will produce 20 million shares at the rate of JD3.6, well above the JD1.8 market price of the stock before the trade ban was imposed. "The commission's decision is aimed at bridging the gap between the current share price of the Jordan Cement Factories and the one Lafarge agreed to with the government," the broker said.

(Continued on page 12)

Minister criticises government Emoush says no need for his ministry if it remains powerless

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush publicly criticised the government saying that there was no need for his ministry if he was not empowered to carry out much-needed public sector reforms.

Charging that too many parties were involved in the ministry's work, Emoush, an Islamist who was expelled by the influential Islamic Action Front Party for taking a different position over the group's decision to boycott last year's general elections, said that only the prime minister and

his team were collectively responsible for carrying out such reforms.

"My ministerial portfolio only carries the name of administrative development but is void of powers and authority to perform its duties despite the presence of a political will to do that," the Arabic daily Ad Dustour quoted the minister as telling members of the National Society for Freedom and Democracy (Jund) late on Wednesday.

"In the present circumstances, I see no need for my ministry because it is not logical for it to carry out

these duties."

The Arabic daily Al Ra'i also quoted him as telling Jund that "the authority to carry out administrative development and reform must be given to one department in order to enable it to reward the competent and to punish the negligent (government) employees."

At present, Emoush charged, the Council of Ministers holds collective responsibility for the incompetence in the state's institutions because it is empowered to do so. The Ministry of Administrative Development, he added,

serves as the state's brain behind such reforms, and as such its authority is manifested solely in holding workshops on administrative reforms and development and submitting proposals and studies to the Cabinet to take the appropriate decisions.

Still Emoush, long a controversial figure in party politics, said he remained optimistic about realising his authority and getting to the work at hand. "I will continue to seek this authority (to carry out reforms) until it has been realised."

The government of Fayez Tarawneh, formed on August 20, was asked by His Majesty King Hussein in a letter of designation to fight corruption, nepotism, favouritism and bureaucracy as well as poverty and unemployment.

Emoush said his ministry was calling for the creation of a higher reforms council to help achieve those goals.

Citing an example of abuse of administrative powers, Emoush said that four reports submitted to Parliament by the Audit Bureau on public administration excesses are still in

the drawers of the Lower House.

According to Emoush a report by the Audit Bureau in 1997 speaks about JD3 million embezzlement cases and notes that the Department for Combating Corruption saved the treasury JD40 million over the past two years through its investigations.

The minister said these facts demonstrate that in the absence of a central authority concerned with reforms and development corruption continues to flourish.

Kurdish rebel leader Ocalan released from detention in Rome

Turkish envoy to Italy slams decision

ROME (AP) — A Rome court freed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan from detention Friday but ordered him to remain in Rome while his appeal for political asylum is considered.

Ocalan has been held in a military hospital since he was arrested last week upon arrival on a flight from Moscow.

Turkey has demanded his extradition, but Italy's law prohibits it from extraditing someone to a country where he may face the death penalty, as is the case with Ocalan in Turkey.

"I am amazed," Turkey's ambassador to Italy, Inal Batu, told the AP news agency. "The head of a terrorist organisation, a notorious assassin is treated by your country like a welcome guest."

Italian Premier Massimo D'Alema insists he won't be intimidated by Turkey. "We will apply the decisions of the courts," D'Alema told reporters during a visit to Florence.

Germany announced Wednesday that it would

not seek the extradition of Ocalan, who also has been wanted in Germany on charges of terrorism since 1990. The decision meant Italy no longer needed to detain Ocalan on the German-issued arrest warrant.

"It is clear that we will review our economic and trade relations with a government, which by keeping the murderer of 30,000 people and providing him haven, is becoming an accomplice to his crimes," Turkey's Defence Minister Ismet Sezgin said from Ankara.

The Anatolia news agency reported that Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz appealed to NATO for support, explaining that Ocalan is the "worst terrorist of the century."

In a written statement, Ocalan appealed to the thousands of Kurds who have travelled to Rome in a show of solidarity to return home and sustain the Kurdish cause through legal and democratic means.

"I don't want our people to keep protesting and setting themselves on fire and

I don't want any behaviour which might reflect badly on the Kurdish people," said the statement read by a Kurdish spokesman in Rome, Akif Hasan.

About 700 Kurds began dancing and chanting pro-Ocalan slogans in a central Rome piazza when they heard of Ocalan's release.

Turkey has been furious over Italy's refusal to turn over Ocalan. Turkish businesses have begun boycotting Italian goods in response.

Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini denounced the boycott, calling the action "an aggression against all of Europe." Italy's opposition forces have called for Ocalan's expulsion from Italy.

Ocalan heads a guerrilla movement which has fought a 14-year war for autonomy in predominantly southeastern Turkey. Nearly 37,000 people have been killed.

Friday's court decision said Ocalan will be free to move around Rome but he will have to notify authorities of any plans to leave his residence.



POVERTY IN IRAQ: Impoverished Iraqi women and children mob a man Friday as he gives out money outside Al Jilani Mosque in Baghdad. United Nations arms monitors went out to work on Friday despite bitter verbal sniping between Iraq and its adversaries in the West (Reuters photo)

Israelis charged with spying on Cyprus

Official request for bail turned down by Cypriot court

LARNACA (R) — Cyprus on Friday formally charged two Israeli nationals with spying for an unnamed foreign country on the militarily divided eastern Mediterranean island.

In a case which has strained Cyprus-Israel relations, Udi Hargov, 37, and Igal Damary, 49, were accused of conspiracy to spy and possession of banned listening equipment.

The two countries enjoy close relations, but, in an indication of how determined Cyprus is to clear the case up, the court in the southern port of Larnaca on Friday rejected an official request from the Israeli government to release the suspects on bail in the care of the Israeli embassy in Nicosia.

"With the intent of harming the safety or the interests of the Cyprus Republic, the accused collected information on the defence of the republic and passed this information on to a foreign country," an investigating officer told the court.

Defence lawyers had brought the consul at the Israeli embassy, Michel Harel, to vouch for the two suspects.

"As a representative of the Israeli embassy and the state of Israel, we undertake the obligation that the two suspects appear in the court whenever requested," Harel told the court.

The request was hotly contested by public prosecutors, who expressed concern that the accused could take flight. Harel said the Israeli embassy routinely made such requests in other countries "when we believe the suspects are innocent."

Judge Tefkros Economou sided with prosecutors. "Under the circumstances and with all respect to the consul of Israel and his good intent, the purpose can be secured only through detention by Cyprus authorities," he said.

Israel has denied the two men were working against Cyprus or for Turkey, which invaded northern Cyprus in

1974 after a brief Greek-inspired coup.

The two suspects were arrested at a village on the island's southern coast on Nov. 7 after reports of suspect Israeli activity in the area. Police said high-tech listening equipment was found at their rented apartment, tuned in to police radio frequencies.

Spies carry a maximum sentence upon conviction of 10 years in prison under Cyprus law.

The two suspects were not obliged to answer the charges, which were translated to them in Hebrew from Greek by an interpreter. Standing at the dock in court on Friday, they just nodded when asked if they understood the accusations.

Police said the alleged offences were committed between Oct. 15 and Nov. 6. The first date refers to another visit of the pair to Cyprus, during a large-scale military exercise with Greek and Cypriot armed forces.

The region is said to be militarily sensitive and is suspected of being the site of a new Cypriot naval base.

The case has fanned imaginations on the island, with media speculation ranging from the Israelis being spies for Turkey, to them snooping on the military in an attempt to gauge when the island will take delivery of a purchase of surface-to-air missiles from Russia.

Turkey has vowed to prevent deployment of the missiles, the arrival date of which is a closely guarded secret.

Top criminal lawyer Antis Triantafyllides described evidence against the two as flimsy and criticised media coverage of the case. "The principle of innocent until proven guilty has been violated day in, day out for the past 15 days by the media," he said.

Hargov and Damary, who are being held in separate detention areas, looked cheerful. Camera-shy in previous appearances, Hargov at one point stuck his tongue out at a photographer.

Amnesty says Israel, allies holding Lebanese cleric

BEIRUT (R) — Human rights watchdog Amnesty International said on Friday Israel and its local proxy had arrested a Lebanese religious leader last month and called for the cleric's release if he is not put on trial soon.

"Amnesty International has just received news of the arrest of religious leader Abbas Muhsein Fadlallah whom the organisation fears could be at risk of torture or ill-treatment and prolonged detention without trial," the London-based organisation said in a statement.

"We call for his release, if he is not to be charged with criminal offences and tried according to international standards for a fair trial," it added.

Amnesty said Fadlallah, a Shi'ite, was arrested by Israeli security forces and their local South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia on Oct. 27 at his home in Kfar Kila, inside the Jewish state's south Lebanon occupation zone.

He was taken to the SLA-run Khiam prison inside the 15-km deep zone. Amnesty did not say whether Fadlallah

was part of the guerrilla groups fighting the Israeli occupation.

The statement said around 140 detainees were believed to be held at Khiam jail, some without trial for up to 15 years.

Israel set up the security zone in 1985, saying it had to protect its northern borders from potential guerrilla attacks.

The pro-Iranian Shi'ite Hizbollah (Party of God) and other guerrilla groups are waging a war to oust the Israelis and the SLA from Lebanon's south.

Israeli who allegedly wanted to attack Netanyahu brought to court

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli court on Friday extended by four days the detention of an Israeli nun suspected of planning to attack Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Outside the magistrate's court in the northern town of Acre, several ultra-Orthodox Jews

chanted and read psalms to show support for the suspect, Shabtai Bloch, 48, a member of the ultra-Orthodox Chabad group.

Bloch allegedly plotted to attack Netanyahu during the prime minister's visit to the town of Safed in northern Israel

on Thursday evening. Police gave no further details. Bloch's lawyer told Israel Radio that his client opposes violence.

Chabad members demonstrated against Netanyahu in Safed during the visit, angry over last month's Israel-Palestinian agreement that calls on

Israel to hand over territory in the West Bank.

Israel Radio said Bloch organised the protest.

At Chabad headquarters in New York, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, a spokesman for the movement, said: "Violence, even the threat of violence, is anathema

to Chabad.

Chabad supported Netanyahu in Israel's 1996 election, but members feel Netanyahu has betrayed them by agreeing to hand over West Bank land to Palestinian control.

On Friday, the Israeli court ruled that the police had suffi-

cient evidence to justify holding Bloch for another four days.

In 1995, a ultra-nationalist Jew assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, trying to stop Rabin's policy of trading West Bank land for peace with the Palestinians.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Animaniacs
15:30 The Adv. of Bush Patrol
16:00 Drama - Neighbours
16:30 Peer Pressure
17:00 French Programme - Faust
17:30 Wind at My Back
18:00 New in French
19:15 French Programme 19:30
19:35 News Headlines
19:55 Murphy Brown
20:00 D.C. - Today's Health
20:30 Drama - The Pretender
21:15 An ABC Democracy
21:30 Boston Pops
22:00 News in English
22:30 Future film - "Trip Trap"
23:59 Twisted
01:00 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

06:44 Fajr
06:44 Sunrise/Duha
11:21 Dhuhur
14:14 Asr
16:38 Maghreb
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweflith, Tel. 593740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4622785
St. Joseph Church Tel.
4624800
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622346

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Aftem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Annam International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweiflith Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Warm weather conditions will

prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy under the effect of unstable weather conditions. Scattered thunder showers are expected and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, occasionally rainy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas choppy.

Min/Max temp.
Amman 13/25
Aqaba 18/29
Deserts 11/27
Jordan Valley 18/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 23 Aqaba 25. Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 66 per cent.
Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 09/17
Jerash 12/24
Um Qays 11/23
Madaba 08/22
Petra 07/23
Dead Sea 16/30

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem 4620115

Dr. Wisam Hazyin 4748563
Dr. Khalid Abdo 467129
Dr. Munther Al Qatani 4779959
AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Ruka Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 021250080
Fou'ad Pharmacy 021275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Salfarini 0987565
Palestine Pharmacy 0987562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade 4671101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 4896300
Traffic Police 4896300
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Ward & Sewage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 7871111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921149
The Islamic, Abdul 5666137
Husseini Medical Centre 5856856
Luznita 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4642816
Akileh Maternity 4642442
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5617071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5534444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdul 5664164
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771013
Al-Bashir 4775111/126
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Amal Hospital 5607155
Al Arsal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Zarqa National Hospital 09883323
The Sima Hospital 09886731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09886731

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 021275555
Roman Catholic Hospital 021272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 021710372, 021710301
Rosary Sisters Hospital 021710281, 021710201
Specialty Hospital 0217103101

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 0312014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information departments at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250. Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone

4875201-5.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:55 Tehran (RJ)
08:30 Damascus (RJ)
08:30 Aqaba Iaddi (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:35 Colombo (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:40 Frankfurt (RJ)
19:45 Rome (RJ)
20:45 Paris (RJ)
22:50 Larnaca (RJ)
07:00 Bangkok, Sharjah (RJ)

Other Flights

13:05 Vienna (OS)
13:15 Riyadh (SV)
13:20 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:05 Rome (AZ)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:05 Paris (AF)
19:15 Frankfurt (LH)
21:35 Cairo (MS)
22:55 London, Damascus (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
01:00 Belgrade (JU)

Royal Wings (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QALAI) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00 Aqaba (addi) (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
09:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30 Rome (RJ)
12:00 Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:35 Larnaca (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bombay (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:15 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights

06:15 Damascus, London (BA)
06:30 Larnaca (CY)
14:15 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45 Riyadh (SV)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
02:10 Belgrade (JU)

Royal Wings (RW)

07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QALAI) (RW)

Home N
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During a trip to New York, Queen Nour was seen at a fundraising drive for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Queen Nour was accompanied by Prince Faysal and his wife, and his daughter, Princess Alia. The Queen was seen with a group of children and a group of women. The Queen was seen with a group of children and a group of women. The Queen was seen with a group of children and a group of women.

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Queen delivers address at United World Colleges fundraising event

AMMAN (J.T.) — During a one-day trip to New York, Her Majesty Queen Noor patronised a fundraising dinner Thursday for the United World Colleges (UWC), which was attended by Queen Sophia of Spain, Queen Anne-Marie of the Hellenes, Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece and his wife, and other officials and dignitaries, a Royal Court statement said.

Queen Noor, president of the UWC, honoured two major donors: Milto Petrie, who set up a scholarship fund in memory of her son, the Marquis de Portago, and the Shelby Davis family, which contributed \$45 million, "the largest gift ever made in the United States to international education." The proceeds of the dinner went to scholarship funds for UWC students, the statement said.

In her remarks, Queen Noor said: "We do not want simply to produce educated young people, important as that is; we hope to nurture educated activists and future leaders who can identify and help to resolve the challenges within their own societies and contribute to stability, peace and justice in the wider world."

The Queen noted that the Middle East and the UWC would mutually benefit from enhanced participation in the UWC movement as the UWC are educating "a new generation of architects and builders of peace," while the young people of the region would "bring a particularly seasoned perspective to the movement's goals of tolerance, conflict resolution and global solidarity."

Queen Noor added that the establishment of an 11th United World College in the Middle East was "endorsed with enthusiasm" by the UWC International Board and preliminary studies for the college have been under-



taken at a site in Aqaba, which overlooks "the strategic and symbolic juncture of Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt."

Students studying there in the future, according to the Queen, will be able to work on joint projects involving all four countries that could "enhance cross-border cooperation."

The Queen concluded her speech with a saying from South African President Nelson Mandela, president of the UWC International Council: "I have crossed famous rivers," meaning that one has travelled a great distance and gained experience and wisdom from it. She said the UWC "build the bridges that make those crossings possible. They are bridges across cultures and within communities, and they start with a single bridge — the one that spans a divide between two

people."

The UWC is an equal opportunity international secondary education programme designed to foster cross-cultural understanding and global peace. Founded in 1962, it consists of 10 colleges situated in Wales, Canada, Singapore, the U.S., Swaziland, Italy, Venezuela, Hong Kong, Norway and India. Students are chosen on merit regardless of race, creed, colour, background or financial ability and the majority are awarded scholarships.

HRH Prince Zeid Ben Ra'd and Jordan's ambassador to the U.N., Hassan Abu Nimah, attended the dinner with the Queen. Later that evening, Queen Noor returned to Washington, D.C., where she rejoined His Majesty King Hussein, who was taking a break from treatment at the Mayo Clinic, the statement said.

Criminal Court acquits three Egyptian nationals charged with 1995 murder

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Three men charged with the gruesome murder of a 29-year-old Egyptian in December 1995 were acquitted Thursday by the Criminal Court, which ruled that their confessions were extracted under mental duress.

Nabil Amin, 27, Mohammad Tahami, 25, and Mohammad Maghazi, 28, all Egyptian nationals, were found innocent of the charges of the murder and mutilation of Massad Shinawi on Dec. 30.

The court, comprising Justices Mohammad Ajarmeh, Mifleh Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, said it could not rely on the defendants' confessions "since they were subjected to mental duress."

It added that the evidence submitted by the prosecution to indict the men "was not solid, and there were some errors in some of the police procedures."

Shinawi's body was dismembered, placed in a red suitcase and left at the bus terminal near Mamoura Hotel in Wihdat on Dec. 30, 1995. The victim had suffered a blow to the head and his throat was slit.

In February 1996, the authorities announced the arrest of the three suspects and said they had strong evidence that linked the suspects to the murder. Luggage porters at the bus terminal noted that the red suitcase was left unattended and called the police.

Court ratifies murder acquittal

Meanwhile, the Court of Cassation on Thursday

ratified a Criminal Court ruling from September acquitting two cousins of complicity in the murder of a man in Salt in May 1997.

Faisal and Mohammad Kharabsheh, both 20, were each sentenced to 10 years in prison in May of this year for murdering Ibrahim Mohammad on May 9, 1997, in the Rmeim area of Salt following a fight.

Also sentenced was Ghazi Ali, 20, who received 15 years for manslaughter. Ali's sentence was also ratified by the Court of Cassation.

In July, the Court of Cassation returned the case to the Criminal Court requesting a retrial, "because the Criminal Court based its rulings only on the prosecution's witnesses and failed to

consider other witnesses' testimonies."

Based on the higher court's request, the Criminal Court stated in its September ruling that after hearing several witnesses for the second time, "it was proven that the two defendants were trying to stop the fighting."

Qashash trial postponed until Nov. 29

Also Thursday, the Criminal Court postponed the trial of 19-year-old Sa'eed Qashash, the student accused of killing 11 family members and a close friend, until Nov. 29 to either issue a verdict or further examine the case.

The victims of the June 10, 1998 mass murder included Qashash's par-

ents, brothers, sisters, a brother-in-law and his life-long friend Ata Sha'an. All the victims were reportedly shot in the back of the head.

Qashash, who confessed to the murder one day after the discovery of the bodies, told authorities that he committed the crimes because his family was harassing him about his academic performance and had threatened to kick him out of the house.

Last month, Qashash retracted his confessions in court and claimed that four other people were the actual killers.

He claimed that the four were searching for computer diskettes that belonged to one of his brothers, who was one of the victims.

Ministry awards contracts for bus route operations

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Transport on Thursday signed contracts with three local firms to operate, manage and invest in four areas of operation for bus routes in the Greater Amman Municipality as part of the ministry's plans to rehabilitate and privatise the state-run Public Transport Corporation (PTC).

The first area, which includes eight main routes served by 60 buses, will be operated by for the Tawfiq Transport and Investment Company under a JD140,000 annual lease agreement.

The Asia Transport Company will operate three routes served by 26 buses in the second area under a JD136,000 annual lease deal. The same firm will also operate the third area, which consists of five main routes served by 39 buses, under an annual lease agreement worth JD196,000.

The Jordanian Company for Consultation and Investment will operate the fourth area, which consists of seven main routes served by 40 buses, for JD85,000 per year.

The areas will become fully serviced between April and August 1999.

The contracts include importing new vehicles in line with international standards and operating routes according to fixed

schedules. Insurance, communications and maintenance systems will be provided. Uniforms will be worn by drivers, who will work on eight-hour shifts.

In order to divest its interest in the indebted transport sector, the government last month asked a local accounting firm to begin liquidating the PTC's liabilities and sell its assets, mainly decrepit buses in use since the early 1980s.

The firm, a government monopoly which has had the concession rights on all routes in the Amman area since its inception in the 1970s, has recorded monthly losses of JD100,000.

The company's buses currently cover five per cent of Amman's routes, while 13 private operators run 500 smaller modern buses under a 15-year concession granted seven years ago.

The corporation awarded the concession rights to operate the new buses after the Gulf crisis forced over 300,000 Jordanians to return from the Arab Gulf states, straining the firm's operations.

Despite their heavy dependence on public buses, commuters have long complained of unreliable, unsafe and low-quality service from the PTC.

Jordanian, Palestinian parliamentarians agree to strengthen bilateral cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Palestinian parliamentarians concluded a three-day meeting Friday with an agreement to strengthen relations between the national assemblies in Jordan and Palestine.

A joint statement issued upon the conclusion of the Palestinian delegation's visit to Jordan said the speakers and members of the Senate and the Lower House and their counterparts from the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) held important, frank and in-depth talks on Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation in financial, economic, legal and other fields.

The two sides underlined the importance of the Palestinian delegation's visit, noting that it came at a sensitive time in the Middle East that requires intensive coordination of Jordanian-Palestinian stands, according to the statement.

The two sides agreed to promote economic and trade cooperation and work towards removing obstacles impeding mutual import-export operations.

They formed a joint committee to coordinate matters between the two assemblies at the local, regional and international levels.

The two sides said they will work towards integrating the Jordanian and Palestinian economies in order to gradually reduce the Palestinians' economic dependence on Israel.

During their stay in Amman, the Palestinian delegation, led by PLC Speaker Ahmad Qureia, was received by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, who underlined the importance of maintaining and strengthening Jordanian-Palestinian coordination in order to safeguard the interests of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples.

what's going on

LECTURE

* "The Sanctuaries of Wadi Khura" by Father Michelle Piccirilli at the City Hall, Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain at 6:30 p.m. (The lecture will discuss the importance of Tell Khura where modern employers have found pottery shards from Roman periods and stone vessels).

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Farouq Hassan at Yfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthman (Tel. 5526932), until Nov. 29.

* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.

* Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection entitled "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabal Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.

* Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan (sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

* Exhibition of watercolours by Mukarram Haghondouq at Institutio Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 24.



GIFT DISTRIBUTION TO MARK KING'S BIRTHDAY: Marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, members of Al Mustaqbal Club distribute gifts to children hospitalised at Al Hussein Medical Centre. They also organised a blood donation drive (Petra photo)

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Pakistan PM uses military courts to quell violence

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced Friday that military courts would be established immediately to restore peace in Karachi, where nearly 800 people have been killed this year.

He said Article 245 of the Constitution had been invoked to give the military powers to back the provincial administration against the sectarian, political and ethnic violence that has earned Karachi the title "City of Death." "We have decided to invoke article 245 under which military courts have been established to help restore peace in Karachi," Sharif told reporters in Karachi.

It was the most radical step Sharif's government had taken against the nearly daily bloodshed in Karachi, a city of 12 million and Pakistan's main port and commercial centre.

Sharif on Oct. 30 dismissed the provincial government of Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital, and imposed direct or governor's rule, saying the measure was needed to thwart "terrorism" and restore peace in Karachi.

"The police will continue to do its work and (paramilitary) Rangers will do theirs but from now on, if needed, the army can be called in for assistance," he said.

Officials say more than 500 people were killed in Karachi in 1997 and close to 800 have been killed so far this year.

They say 28 of these were high profile murders and an estimated 490 people are suspected of involvement in most of these crimes.

The official news agency APP said President Mohammad Rafiq Tarar Friday promulgated the Pakistan Armed Forces (Acting in Aid of the Civil Powers) Ordinance, 1998.

The Ordinance, which comes into force at once, sets out the powers and duties of the Armed Forces acting in aid of civil power, under Article 245 of the Constitution.

"The Ordinance shall extend to such areas of the Province of Sindh in which the Armed Forces are called upon to act in aid of the civil powers under article 245 of the Constitution, it added.

Sharif said all cases of terrorism and serious crimes in Karachi would be shifted to military courts and that "appeals (against decisions) would also be heard by military courts."

"These courts will take decisions not in months, not in weeks but in days," he said.

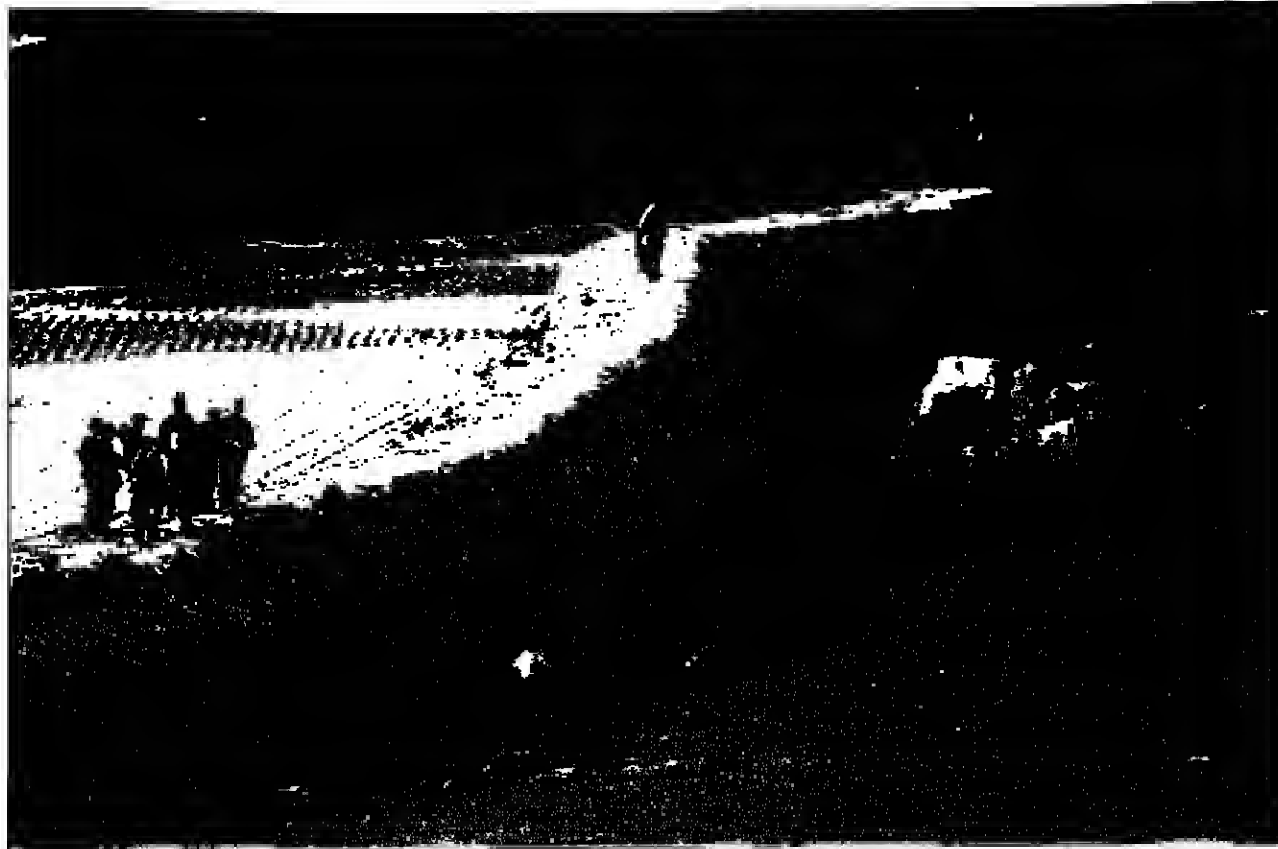
He said the governor will continue to head the provincial administration and military courts will operate until they are no longer needed.

Sharif refused to comment when asked if the powers and functions of normal courts, political activities, the freedom of press and the provincial parliament had been suspended.

But a ruling party official who asked not to be named said: "Effectively the province has been given to the army." Two days before imposing direct rule in Sindh, Sharif accused his key ally in the province — Mutahida National Movement (MQM) — of involvement in the daylight murder of a former governor of the province Hakim Said.

Friday he named several supporters of the MQM for alleged involvement in dozens of murders and terrorism in the city.

"We do not expect any justice from this measure," an MQM leader, Shoaib Bhukari told Reuters.



South Korean investigators search for signs of possible North Korean intruders on Kanghwa Island. South Korea issued a high security alert on its sea border with North Korea after firing warning shots on an unidentified ship which sailed into its waters (Reuters photo)

South Korean radar picks up suspected N. Korean infiltration boat

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean troops and police were put on maximum alert Friday after a North Korean infiltration vessel was detected off the country's west coast, reports said.

The intruding vessel, a seven-metre submersible craft, was spotted on radar before dawn. It was intercepted and chased off by military patrols. Yonhap Television News said.

The vessel was similar to infiltration craft which the North uses for landing agents here, it said. Experts said the North routinely runs infiltration missions into South

Korea. Mystery footprints suspected of being those of North Korean agents who might have landed, were also found on a beach on Kanghwa Island, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) officials said.

Kanghwa is northwest of Seoul, on an island linked to the mainland by causeways. Earlier Yonhap noted that the area, which is off limit to civilian vessels, was used as an infiltration route by North Korean agents in the past years and that there was no moonlight at the time of the incident.

Navy radar picked up the vessel some 1.5 miles off the Chang-Gok beach in Kanghwa, near the dividing line between the South and North Korean territorial waters around 1:45 a.m. (16:45 GMT Thursday).

The vessel alternately appeared and disappeared from radar until it crossed the line back into the North at 05:09 a.m. (20:09 Thursday).

South Korean patrol boats could not chase the vessel because the sea was at the lowest ebb.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff put thousands of troops in the area on top alert and mobilised patrol boats and anti-subma-

rine helicopters for a search operation. The two sides are still technically at war after the Korean War of 1950-53 ended in a tense truce.

In June, nine bodies were found in a North Korean mini-submarine which was caught in a fishing net in South Korean waters. South Korean authorities said agents were among the dead.

Weeks later, the body of a suspected North Korean commando thought to have died while attempting to land, was found on an east coast beach in the same area the submarine became entangled.

Apartheid-era politicians avoiding prosecution

PRETORIA (R) — South African Justice Minister Dullah Omar said Friday prosecutions arising from the truth probe would be done in the national interest, a move officials said could let apartheid-era politicians off the hook.

Omar told a media briefing that he foresaw that cases against alleged human rights abusers would take up to a decade to settle in the wake of the two-year investigation by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of apartheid atrocities committed by all sides.

"The TRC has recommended that prosecutions be completed in two years. I think that is wishful thinking... it is unattainable," Omar said.

He said that prosecutions were not aimed at hurting efforts at reconciling a country still divided by decades of

racial oppression, but rather at establishing the rule of law. "We must establish accountability... for the future. We must establish the rule of law," he said.

But Omar also said decisions to prosecute alleged offenders would be taken "in the interest of the country." He did not elaborate but officials in his department said this offered a way for high-profile politicians from both sides of the apartheid struggle to avoid a court date.

Several leading politicians have been accused of human rights violations, but have not sought amnesty from prosecution from the TRC, which has the power to grant legal absolution in exchange for what it accepts as truthful testimony.

Among those who have not applied for amnesty are former President P.W. Botha, accused of complicity in

bombings of anti-apartheid activists, and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, the former wife of President Nelson Mandela, who has been accused of murdering and kidnapping opponents in the late 1980s.

It is also possible that several other cabinet ministers from the last white government as well as some top leaders of the ruling African National Congress could also face prosecution for having ordered incidents that led to human rights abuses.

"There has been no firm decision about the high-profile cases, but I would guess it's unlikely the likes of P.W. (Botha) will be prosecuted," a justice department official told Reuters.

A special prosecuting unit set up to deal with cases arising from the apartheid era has several prosecutions ready for

trial, but not of top current or former politicians.

Jan D'Oliviera, who heads the unit, said recently that cases against two former generals in the apartheid security forces were ready for court, but that he was awaiting the outcome of their amnesty applications.

He also said the case against Madikizela-Mandela was being prepared but he was not prepared to say when, or if, the populist ANC leader would be prosecuted.

The TRC report, compiled after two years of often emotional testimony from victims and perpetrators, branded apartheid a crime against humanity, but also said the ANC was guilty of gross human rights violations in its fight against the system of legalised racial discrimination.

Ho-ho-no! Britain faces Santa shortage

LONDON (AP) — It seems the Santa Claus business in Britain has fallen on lean times.

One of the country's largest suppliers of Santa Claus costumes reports a serious shortage of actors aspiring to play the jolly old elf this year — a problem partly blamed on healthier eating trends.

The Ministry of Fun, a London-based entertainment agency, demands that its Santas be convincing — which means an authentic fat belly is required. "Kids can

spot padding," agency director Julian Pearson says.

But fewer Santas are measuring up this year.

"They're eating salads and everything like this," Pearson says. "This is not what we want. We need to fatten them up." Pearson faces finding Santas for about 470 engagements, ranging from store appearances to magazine shoots, in the weeks leading up to Christmas. So far, he's got only about 30 working, fewer than in previous years.

The demand for Santas is especially high this season, so Pearson says he's even scanned ads in actors' trade newspapers trying to recruit older, portly actors — preferably with their own white beards.

But most physically suitable thespians refuse to subject themselves to the rigors of being Kris Kringle, he says.

Francine Esty Elkington's Manchester marketing agency also is desperately seeking suitable Santas. She agrees older actors with the right look and voice tend to be weight-

conscious, which means they don't fill out the suit properly.

"I think everybody is facing the same sort of thing," she says of the shortage.

Pearson says he'll take amateurs who look the part, but applicants must audition, and most don't make the cut.

For the ones who do, the pay isn't bad — about 100 pounds (\$167) for a few hours of spreading good cheer. "It's a huge job," Pearson says. "It's the most magical job in the world."

Charles has been especially protective of his two sons, Harry and William, 16, who is second in line to the throne.

Morgan described a letter sent to him by Prince Charles' private secretary, Stephen Lamport, asking the Mirror to apologise publicly to Prince Harry, as "a thinly disguised attempt to bully and censor the press."

"The truth is that you wish to control everything the media writes about the people you work for," he added.

British newspapers adopted a new tough code of practice last year after the death of Prince Harry's

mother, Princess Diana, in which they pledged to respect the private lives of children of the rich and famous.

Charles has been especially protective of his two sons, Harry and William, 16, who is second in line to the throne.

The Press Complaints Commission, a body funded by the newspaper industry as part of its efforts to avoid a statutory body to monitor press coverage in Britain, could order the Mirror to publish an apology for its stories.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton calls impeachment panel's subpoena of lawyer unprecedented

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton said he did not see Thursday's impeachment hearings in Washington, but was surprised to hear that his lawyer Bob Bennett had been subpoenaed as one of the House Judiciary Committee's upcoming witnesses. "As far as I know," Clinton told reporters Friday in Tokyo before boarding the presidential plane, Air Force One, to fly to Seoul — the next stop in his Asia tour for Seoul, "there's never been a case where a person's lawyer was asked to come and testify." However, Clinton said he was "not concerned" about the subpoenas. After independent counsel Kenneth Starr's 12-hour testimony Thursday before the Judiciary Committee, the 37-member, Republican-led panel surprised everyone by deciding to subpoena Bennett and Deputy White House counsel Bruce Lindsey, when it convenes next week. After the Republicans' poor showing in the Nov. 3 midterm elections, committee chairman Henry Hyde had decided to hear only from Starr in its impeachment probe, but later this week changed his mind. Clinton, whose comments were relayed by telephone to Washington after Air Force One took off from Tokyo, declined to comment on Starr's testimony before the committee, saying his only information on the hearing came from a "personal briefing." "I've got work to do here (Seoul) on the Asian economy and on these security issues," Clinton told reporters. "All that (hearings) is being handled by people back in Washington."

42 million Russians live below poverty line

MOSCOW (AFP) — Around 42 million Russians, or 28.6 per cent of the 148 million population, live below the poverty line of 573 rubles (\$35) a month, the State Statistics Committee reported Friday, cited by Interfax. A year ago, the committee said around 20.9 per cent of the population, lived below the poverty line, then put at \$67. The ruble has lost around one-third of its value since devaluation in August amid an unprecedented financial crisis. Russia owes around \$8.1 billion rubles (\$5.16 billion) in unpaid wages to civil servants and other state employees, according to official figures released last month. A recent U.N. Development Programme report said 150 million people had been plunged into poverty during the 1990s in countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. That report labelled Russia one of the worst hit countries, along with Armenia and Georgia, with between 30 and 40 per cent of the population living on less than \$100 a month.

Parisian woman found dead of starvation

PARIS (AP) — A 26-year-old woman was found dead from starvation in her Paris apartment, and her sister, found with her, was suffering from acute malnutrition, police said Friday. Police said rescue workers called to the apartment in southern Paris found the body of Malika, whose last name was not released, Thursday. Her sister, Nadia, 32, who was in the apartment at the time, was hospitalised in an advanced state of malnutrition. Nadia told rescue workers that her sister had no income for several months and that the family was unable to buy food, according to police. Further details were not immediately available. It was not immediately clear who alerted rescue workers to the situation. Police said an investigation was under way. Meanwhile, French radio reported that frigid temperatures took the life Friday of a homeless man near one of the city's major hospitals, Cochin, also in southern Paris. According to a witness who spoke on Europe 1 radio, the man died because emergency social services refused to come get him. The witness was identified only as Michelle. She said she called several emergency numbers and was turned away and redirected to a new service each time. She said the man was still alive when firefighters arrived. "He was still alive because they told him, 'no, no, don't move. Don't be afraid,'" she told Europe 1.

First sighting of Mongolian bird in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A specimen of the tiny Mongolian bird known as Blyth's pipit was spotted on the island of Gotland Thursday, attracting bird-watchers from all over the country eager to catch a first-ever glimpse of the bird on Swedish soil. "The pipit's built-in compass must be 180 degrees wrong. It should have been in South East Asia this time of the year," ornithologist Mikael Nord told the daily Svenska Dagbladet. The paper's front page Friday was topped by a picture of the avian celebrity — tiny, grey and caught in a net to be measured and weighed. "It didn't twitter. If it had, we wouldn't have had to catch it to identify it," Nord said. Nord was also delighted to have become the first Swedish bird-watcher to log sightings of 400 different kinds of birds. The ornithologists keep records recording all the birds they see, and for some time, a group of them, including Nord, had been stuck on the 399 mark. As soon as word got out, Nord rushed from his home on the Swedish West coast to the Baltic Sea island of Gotland, and became the first Swedish bird-watcher to reach the 400-mark. One of his main rivals, Christian Cederroth, arrived in Gotland 10 minutes too late — the exotic visitor had already been set free, and had taken off. Unfortunately the ornithologists do not think the Mongolian pipit will last long in the North, which is much too cold and harsh for it.

Falling leaves make British trains run slower

LONDON (AFP) — It's autumn in Britain and that means falling leaves — and railway managers complain, delayed trains. To Railtrack, which runs the infrastructure for Britain's privatised railway companies, poor service is resulting from the problem of leaves falling on tracks and interfering with the grip of train wheels. Not only that, but the leaves this year are "bigger and juicier," leading to such bad delays in the heavily populated Midlands region that Railtrack and the region's Central Trains company issued a joint apology. "There were 30 per cent to 40 per cent more leaves on trees this season and they were 20 per cent bigger and juicier, which caused delays on tracks," a Railtrack spokeswoman said. Another spokeswoman said: "There's certainly been more leaves this autumn and the Midlands has particularly suffered from the leaves-on-the-line problem." The minor natural disaster, an annual complaint by railway companies, is battled by Railtrack's fleet of 80 special trains which coat tracks with grit. A new anti-leaf train is being tested and 25 vehicles are on order if the tests go well.

Prince Charles complains of press coverage of son

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles upped the stakes Friday in a row about the right of his younger son, Prince Harry, to privacy by making an official complaint to Britain's press watchdog over stories about the teenager's school life.

A spokesman for the heir to the throne said he was asking the Press Complaints Commission to examine reports in the tabloid Mirror about incidents at Eton College, the prestigious private school Harry and his elder brother William attend.

The Mirror has recently "revealed" that Harry, 14, scored two goals in a school football match, and that he had an accident with scissors which meant his hair had to be cropped.

Earlier this week, it complained that Prince Charles's office was trying to stop it reporting that Harry had suffered minor bruising during a game of rugby.

The prince's aides believe the Mirror has sensationalised these minor incidents in a way that has made it impossible for his son to

bave a normal life at Eton, just across the River Thames from Windsor Castle.

"This matter is nothing to do with press freedom," a statement issued by the prince's private office said.

"Instead, it is everything to do with the privacy to which Harry and William are entitled during their education. It is about their ability to grow up without the telescope of publicity bearing down on their every move." The Mirror Friday devoted the whole of its front page and two inside

pages to the bizarre row. In a lengthy justification of its actions, editor Piers Morgan said the football and scissors stories were public property since the game was attended by spectators, and anyone seeing the Prince would have noted his "skinhead haircut."

Defending the right to reveal Prince Harry's rugby injuries, Morgan wrote: "I believe that, since he is sporting a sling, it was of sufficient concern to warrant reporting. He is, after all, third in line to the

throne."

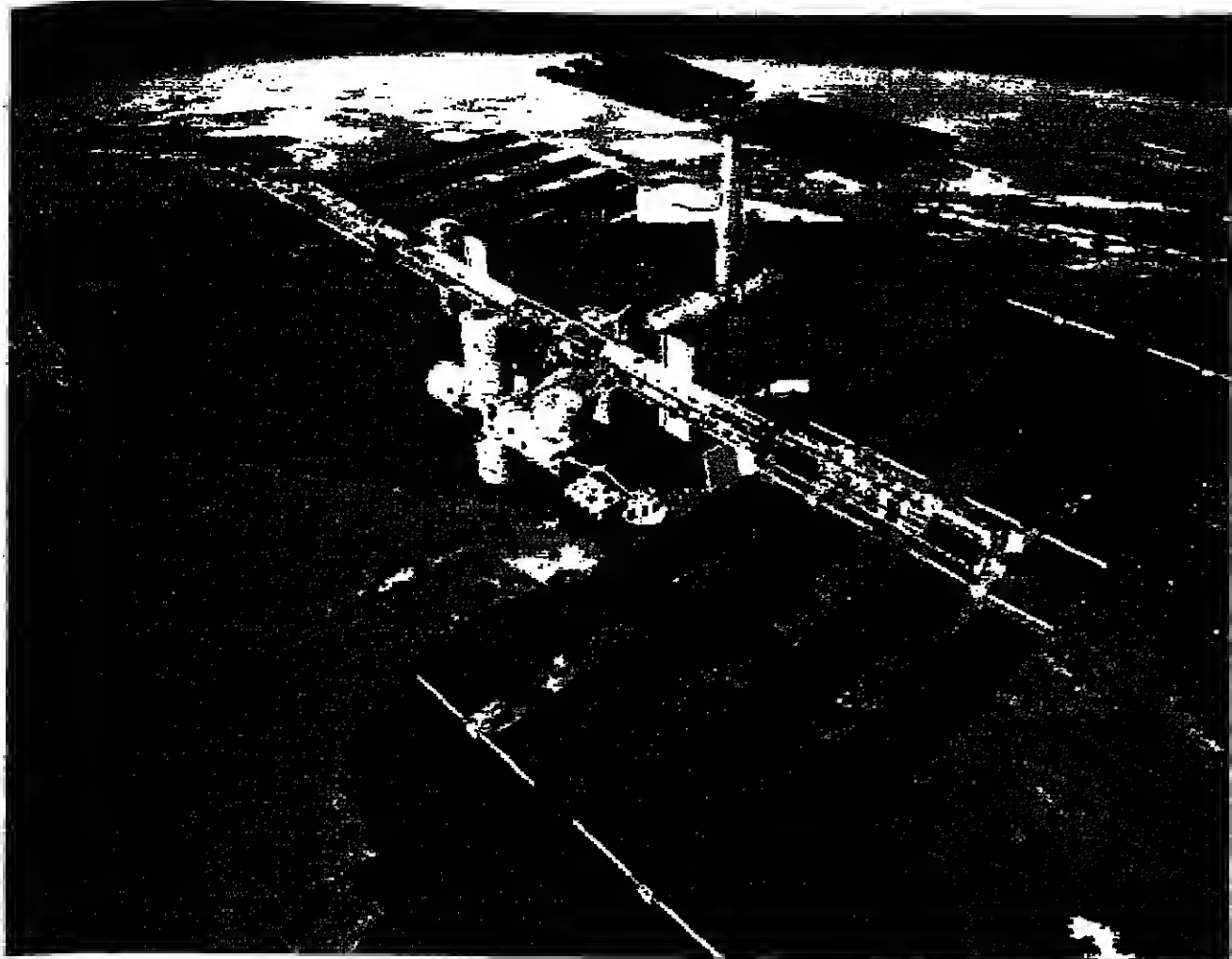
Morgan described a letter sent to him by Prince Charles' private secretary, Stephen Lamport, asking the Mirror to apologise publicly to Prince Harry, as "a thinly disguised attempt to bully and censor the press."

"The truth is that you wish to control everything the media writes about the people you work for," he added. British newspapers adopted a new tough code of practice last year after the death of Prince Harry's

mother, Princess Diana, in which they pledged to respect the private lives of children of the rich and famous.

Charles has been especially protective of his two sons, Harry and William, 16, who is second in line to the throne.

The Press Complaints Commission, a body funded by the newspaper industry as part of its efforts to avoid a statutory body to monitor press coverage in Britain, could order the Mirror to publish an apology for its stories.



Russia ushered in a new era in space exploration on Nov. 20 by launching the first module of the \$60 billion International Space Station. This digital artist's concept shows the ISS passing above the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea after all assembly is completed in 2003. The completed station will be powered by almost an acre of solar panels and have a mass of almost 450,000 kg. Station modules will be provided by the U.S., Russia, Europe and Japan. Canada will provide a mechanical arm and 'Canada hand.' In total, 16 countries are cooperating to provide a state-of-the-art complex of laboratories in the weightless environment (Reuters photo)

Successful ISS launch ends cold war era of space exploration

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan (AFP) — A Russian rocket Friday successfully launched the first element of a multi-billion dollar international space station due to anchor scientific research in space in the 21st century.

The Proton rocket blasted off shortly after 9:40 a.m. Moscow time (0640 GMT) and had powered the module nicknamed Zarya, or Dawn, into orbit some 10 minutes later, Russian space officials said.

The module, built by Russia but ordered and financed by the United States, is the first building block of a 500-tonne space laboratory the size of a football stadium that is due to be fully completed by 2004.

"We should all rejoice at this joint project," said Russian Defence Minister Igor Sergeev at the Kazakh Space Centre in Baitkonur.

A cylinder measuring 12 metres by four metres and weighing 19 tonnes, Zarya will first go into an elliptical orbit between 200 to 300 kilometres above earth.

After an additional 44 launches, the ISS will be the biggest man-made structure in space, acting as a laboratory for

scientists and astronauts from 16 countries. The first crew is due to inaugurate the station in January 2000.

"Today was a big day for Russia," said U.S. astronaut Michael Foale. "It opens a new era in space exploration," he said.

Russia, the United States, Japan, Canada and the European Space Agency are all participating in the construction of the vast orbiting laboratory, which is to be composed of interlocking parts supplied by 16 partner countries.

The \$40-\$100 billion project will be permanently staffed by six or seven people carrying out a range of experiments in medicine, astrophysics and geology, and enable scientists to study the effect of prolonged space life on the human body, thus helping prepare future flights to Mars.

An emotional Yuri Semyonov, head of Russia's space constructor Energiya, said Friday's launch closed the chapter on the cold war era of East-West rivalry.

Baitkonur, he said, had been built "as a launch site for missiles targeting the United States and the majority of countries

now partners in the ISS project."

"During the cold war, both countries were considering space exploration in terms of a competition," chimed Foale. "Each country tried its best to show the other one who was the best. This day is the day we started to work together."

Antonio Rodota, head of the European Space Agency, said all sides would do their utmost to meet project deadlines so as not to risk the entire project.

The grand design has already faced teething problems, primarily in Russia's chronic lack of funding, a penalty which had already begun to have a telling effect on the Mir space station which the ISS is to replace.

Zarya, a replica of the two modules now on the ageing Mir, was built in Moscow at a cost of \$250 million, but the funding had to come from U.S. aeronautics giant Boeing.

A vital service module due to be launched in July or August, which will keep Zarya on its orbit, has already faced considerable delays, and NASA was finally obliged to come to the rescue with a \$60 million cash advance to ensure that it will be ready on time.

In the meantime another element, dubbed Unity, of the ISS is due to be launched by a U.S. space shuttle in December. The component will form a link between Zarya and the service module.

"Within a few years the brightest ever star ever will appear in the sky as a message of hope," said NASA chief Daniel Goldin, noting that the giant structure will be visible at night to the naked eye.

Initially, Zarya will resemble a futuristic aeroplane with its two "wings" — solar panels measuring 10 metres by three. Its main job will be to supply energy, act as a telecommunications centre, and manage future dockings.

In the final configuration, once the new station is up and running, it will become the depot for equipment and a reservoir able to stock up to six tonnes of fuel.

As well as sharing the enormous cost of space exploration, the ISS programme enables the world to benefit from Russian space expertise built up during the Soviet period.

Shaky start for Schroeder, three weeks in office

BONN (R) — Only three weeks after he took the oath of office as Germany's seventh post-war chancellor, the honeymoon is already over for Gerhard Schroeder.

Schroeder ran into a ferocious barrage of media criticism Friday after beating an embarrassing retreat on plans to raise levies on low-paying jobs.

It was the latest stumble for Schroeder, who has squandered his political capital with remarkable speed after his historic defeat of Helmut Kohl eight weeks ago.

The man who campaigned so hard on the pledge to please everyone is now running the risk of pleasing nobody.

The media have led the critical charge against Schroeder, denying the new leader a traditional 100-day grace period. The left-leaning weekly Die Zeit pronounced his first fortnight in office a "false start."

The country's best-selling daily Bild lambasted Schroeder's wavering after he abandoned his plans for levies, failed to

tell his coalition partners in advance about the change of course and postponed promised tax cuts.

"Even members of the SPD are saying the honeymoon is over," wrote Bild in a commentary. "The SPD is fighting itself over the tax reform, zigging and zagging on energy taxes and the low-paying job reform looks like it will collapse in chaos."

Schroeder had already come under attack in the media over his plans to raise social security contributions on jobs paying less than 620 marks (\$370) per month. It was viewed as an attempt to pick the pockets of the poorest workers.

"The new government has looked chaotic," said Dietmar Herz, a political scientist at Bonn University. "Schroeder is not cutting a good figure with his muddling-through approach. There seems to be no direction. He never even got a honeymoon."

In his triumphant election campaign, Schroeder promised to bring an end to the political stagnation

that lingered during the last four years of Kohl's 16-year rule, but he has failed to make any significant breakthroughs.

Taxes are still high and so is unemployment. The heralded tax reform has now been dismissed as minimal, and even that has been pushed back from January to April.

"Madhouse in Bonn — Nothing's working" wrote Cologne's daily Express. "Total confusion in Schroeder's coalition. First they want to end low-income jobs, now they want to save them. First they want to cut pension tax in January. Now in April."

Columnist Maternus Hilger said Schroeder had lost control of his government, annoyed the Greens and made Finance Minister Oskar Lafontaine look like a fool.

"You cannot escape the sense that the government has lost its way with all the tax chaos during the last few days," he wrote. "There is no clear direction in sight." Perhaps compounding the lack of focus on domestic issues, Schroeder has spent as lit-

tle time in Bonn as possible. Aside from visits to Washington, London, Paris, Warsaw and Moscow, Schroeder has been shuttling home to his wife Doris, who has stayed in Hanover with her daughter.

Schroeder's administration got off to a shaky start when Lafontaine waged a public fight to remove the Social Democrats' leader in parliament. Rudolf Scharping, Scharping became defence minister and Lafontaine's finance ministry was expanded.

Lafontaine caused further discord when he tried to persuade the Bundesbank, the fiercely independent central bank, to lower interest rates. The effort failed, but added to the sense that Lafontaine, rather than Schroeder, was calling the shots.

"There have been an awful lot of mistakes made," said Uwe Gehring, a political scientist at the University of Mainz.

"Everything has been so half-hearted. There's been a lack of courage. I had expected a lot more progress by this point."

'Kyoto climate treaty is dead'

WASHINGTON (R) — A leading opponent of the Kyoto climate change treaty, U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel, declared the agreement "dead" Thursday and asked the White House to help start anew on a plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Hagel said there was "no way" the White House could muster the two-thirds vote needed in the Senate to ratify a treaty.

"Very clearly now, this protocol is dead for as far as the eye can see in the U.S. Senate," the Nebraska Republican told a meeting of the Economic Strategy Institute in Washington. "I think that you've got to start all over. This treaty is not achievable," Hagel said.

The U.S. signed the treaty last week at the United Nations, but President Bill Clinton has not submitted the agreement for Senate ratification, as the deal faces strong opposition from Republicans and industrial state Democrats.

Hagel said by signing the Kyoto treaty, the White House defied a resolution passed unanimously by the Senate last year.

The Byrd-Hagel resolution — named for its sponsors, West Virginia Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd and Hagel — said the Senate would never ratify a climate treaty that did not bind all countries by the same mandates and the Senate would not harm the American economy.

Last week also saw the close of an often contentious gathering of 170 nations in Buenos Aires for a U.N. conference on how best to implement the global plan to curb the pollution that many scientists blame for warming the globe and threatening the earth's environment and public health.

Hagel attended the meeting, where no final agreement was reached, since many nations disagreed on how rich and poor countries should share the burden of emission reductions.

He said one of the main reasons the treaty should be scrapped was a lack of participation by developing countries, like China, in the mechanisms to curb emissions.

Washington wants to establish a system of trading in pollution allowances so rich nations can buy them to shift a share of their required emissions reductions to cash-strapped nations that pollute less.

The senator stressed that not all scientists agreed that man-made carbon emissions were the root cause of the apparent warming of the earth and said any new climate change effort "should be predicated on clear, sound science."

Starr's testimony at impeachment probe touch of Kabuki theatre

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Independent counsel Kenneth Starr's performance before the congressional impeachment hearings had "a touch of Kabuki" theatre about it and changed nothing, leading U.S. dailies said Friday.

Thursday's hearings before the House Judiciary Committee "had a touch of Kabuki theatre about it, a formalised spectacle in which all played their assigned roles to little ultimate effect," The Washington Post said.

While Starr's testimony was refreshing after months of only having President Bill Clinton and former White House intern Monica

Lewinsky at the centre of the controversy, the committee — "much like the country" had already made up its mind about the president's conduct.

"No committee Democrats plan to desert the president, and enough Republicans appear inclined to support impeachment on at least some counts that the committee appears destined to send an impeachment resolution to the full House," said the daily.

The only interesting fact to emerge from the day-long proceedings, wrote The New York Times, was Starr's "devastating admission that he had no additional evidence that would

strengthen his case."

Starr carefully explained why he believed the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in the Clinton/Lewinsky affair serious enough for impeachment, but admitted that there was insufficient evidence to pursue the Whitewater, Filegate or Travelgate investigations of Clinton.

"Those who believe... that new information was needed to raise Clinton's misconduct to the level of impeachment," the Times said, "heard none on the Monica Lewinsky matter or on earlier scandals."

The hearing has tilted events in the direction of the Democrats and if the

Republicans can control their eagerness to oust Clinton, the daily said, "the judiciary committee may be lurching toward a conclusion."

The correct conclusion, to the sex-and-lies scandal, the Times said, "is that condemnation through formal congressional censure is the proper punishment, not impeachment by the full house."

The Times recommended that a senior Republican and a senior Democrat on the committee recommend a censure resolution to the full House of Representatives as "the smart parliamentary move and the best outcome for the country."

Two dead, 1,383 injured as two quakes rock China

BEIJING (AFP) — At least two people died and 1,383 people were injured in the double earthquake that rocked southwestern China and left 50,000 homeless, local officials said Friday.

Latest reports from Ninglang Yi autonomous county in Yunnan province are that two people are dead, 210 are seriously injured and 1,173 people are lightly injured," a spokesman for the Ninglang Civil Affairs Bureau said.

"We have brought in 1,000 tents, more than 2,000 quilts and winter clothing because more than 50,000 people are homeless," he said, adding that temperatures

dropped below freezing in the mountainous region, some 3,000 metres above sea level.

The double tremors were measured at 5.0 and 6.2 on the Richter scale and struck at 7:31 p.m. (1131 GMT) and 7:38 p.m. (1138 GMT) Thursday on the border between Ninglang and Yanyuan county in neighbouring Sichuan province.

An official with the Ninglang Seismological Bureau said more than 200 aftershocks reaching up to 3.8 on the Richter scale had been hitting the region since early Friday.

"The biggest aftershock so far has been 3.8, but we predict the

largest could reach 5.5," he said.

The epicentre of the pair of tremors was 27.3 degrees north latitude and 100.9 degrees east longitude, roughly equidistant from the picturesque Yunnan town of Lijiang and the Xichang satellite launch centre in Sichuan province.

In Ninglang alone, some 1,800 houses were destroyed and a significant number damaged, leaving 50,000 people homeless, the local civil affairs bureau said.

In addition, 180,000 of the 220,000 people in the county were affected.

Civil affairs officials in Sichuan

said all communications were down with the quake-struck regions of Yanyuan county and emergency teams were going in by foot.

A local official in Ninglang attributed the high injury toll to the double quake.

"The quake had already been forecast to happen over this time, so people were prepared and ran outside," he said.

"But then they went back into their houses and the second quake happened seven minutes later, so many of them were injured in that quake," he added.

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An atrocity

HOW MANY times have we in the Arab and Muslim World complained that we are subject to discriminatory practices abroad? In many countries of the West, Arabs are subject to officially sanctioned harassment at international airports on the grounds that they may be "terrorists." Arabs rank among the most common victims of racially motivated violent crimes in the United States and France. Jordanians know well the story of discrimination and abuse of Arabs who live in Israel and the occupied territories.

That is why we should not tolerate any abuse or maltreatment of any foreigner who lives among us, and serves us diligently and faithfully.

The stories of Sri Lankan babies being trafficked to Europe and of Indian labourers in the Jordan Valley who were maltreated by their employers had barely faded from memory when the Sri Lankan embassy announced last week that it would bring charges of negligence and abuse against the employer of a Sri Lankan domestic helper. The woman apparently has been so severely abused and mistreated — not to mention robbed of any standard of human dignity — that she cannot speak for physical shock. This story is appalling but certainly not isolated if other domestic workers and doctors are to be believed.

Violence against the weak contradicts basic Arab and Muslim humanitarian values. While we are sure that most Jordanians abhor the abuse inflicted on those among us who are weaker and often of a different colour, even one bigot among us is too many. The fact that such atrocities happen in our country with little retribution meted against those responsible is appalling and is in contradiction to Jordan's own legislation and to all of the Kingdom's international obligations. We are hopeful that the government will not let this issue slide because it would severely mar our upstanding international reputation.

We call on the government to give every support to the Sri Lankan embassy in pursuing justice on behalf of one of her nationals and to send a clear message that such abusive and racist behaviour will not be tolerated in our society.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's Ayida Najjar praised the "Voice of the Wilderness" group for its courage in bringing medicine to Iraq in order to help the Iraqi people in their plight. What makes people do such a noble thing, and subject themselves to imprisonment back home, asked the writer. They are free people, they know what they are doing, and they know the devastating effects of American measures in the Arab World, said Najjar. She pondered why local newspapers didn't carry the news about these five people on their front pages. The free press, in a democratic country must publish the activities of humanitarian groups, said the writer, because humanitarian groups initiate such actions in order to raise public awareness, which in turn might influence politicians.

Al Ra'i in its editorial commented on the peace treaty between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. The paper called on Israel to stop measures by settlers to occupy Arab land in the West Bank. There can not be peace if Israel does not give Palestinians back their land, said the paper. If settlers continue to occupy Arab land, the peace process will fade out of existence, charged the Arab daily. The region has suffered much from the bloodshed. It is time to stop war and start development, added Al Ra'i. The paper called on the Israeli leadership to commit itself to the signed accords and stop procrastinating. Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank should be a demarcation day signalling the beginning of peace in the whole region, added Al Ra'i.

Jordanian Perspective

Ocalan and Turkey's new-found confidence

Dr. Musa Kella

IT WAS a surprise to see three members of Salah Eddin Ayyoubi society in Amman come to my office and ask for a signature of support to the Italian Government not to hand over Kurdish leader Ocalan to Ankara. The three visitors are Jordanians of Kurdish origin who have been in this country for decades, yet still they identify with the aspirations and hopes of their ethnic nation. The Turkish demand for the extradition of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan from Italy despite Rome's principled position that it would not extradite anyone to face a possible death penalty, falls in a pattern of behaviour that can be traced back to its new-found political and military alliance with Israel. Obviously, Ankara, which has been rebuffed by European Union (EU) countries in its bid to join the bloc, now feels that its alliance with Israel affords it the luxury of imposing demands on EU countries. Turkey is also riding high on the sweeping concessions and compromises that it forced Syria to make under military threats to punish Damascus for its support for Ocalan and his Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's rejection of Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema's call for a meeting before a soccer match between Turkey's Galatasaray and Italy's Juventus on Wednesday in Istanbul should also be seen as part of that new-found confidence. "If he wants to talk, let him come to Ankara," Yilmaz said. Considering that it is Turkey which is demanding the extradition of Ocalan, these words only reinforce a belief that Ankara now feels itself to have gathered enough clout to impose its demands on a country like Italy.

Beyond its refusal to entertain calls for dialogue with the Kurds to resolve the problem in its south-east through peaceful means, and its insistence that Ocalan should be extradited to face trial in a Turkish court — with the inevitable outcome of a death sentence — Yilmaz is also trying to reap a political victory ahead of what seems to be inevitable general elections.

However, although such a victory will go down well with the conservative ultranationalist Turkish voters, it is unlikely to ensure him enough majority in parliament, particularly since the Yilmaz government's systematic policy to quell the Islamic

movement has alienated the majority segment of the Turkish population.

Italy argues that its laws do not allow the extradition of anyone to a country where he or she could face the death penalty. It is not a spur-of-the-moment position devised to counter the Turkish demand. It has been adopted and followed by Italy and other members of the EU, and it will seem strange that Ankara also has a vested interest in pressuring a EU member country into violating a EU-respected norm and practice.

Of course, the PKK problem is an internal issue for the Turkish government and a decision left to Turkish sovereignty. However, Ankara has to realise that other countries are dragged into it when, by Turkey's own admission, more than 37,000 people are killed as a direct or indirect result of an internal conflict which has a political tinge. Of course Turkey resents it if anyone refers to Turkish Kurds as a minority.

Ankara will cite the number of Kurdish politicians, legislators and high officials in government as the best evidence that Kurds are not treated as a minority in the country but as fully-fledged citizens. But then history and Turkey's record speak for themselves. It was only in recent years that the Ankara government reluctantly lifted a ban on the use of the Kurdish language as one of the media of instruction in the south-east of the country. Many Kurdish traditional practices invite official wrath even today. Politicians and officials who advocate dialogue as a means to resolve the problem with the Kurds — who are demanding the right to preserve their identity and culture through autonomous rule in Kurdish areas of Turkey — are prosecuted and sent to jail. Government leaders who support some of the Kurdish demands are branded traitors. Repeated PKK offers and observances of ceasefire as the forerunners of dialogue have been met with challenges from Ankara, and the group has not been given any room to manoeuvre within the confines of civilised dialogue. That, if Ocalan is to be believed, is one of the reasons which prompted it to undertake violence as a means to press for its demands.

The popular support for the PKK and Ocalan need no elaboration. Hundreds of Kurds in Turkish jails are on hunger strike;

tens of thousands of Kurds have demonstrated in Turkey and other countries demanding that Ocalan be given asylum in Italy; at least three Kurds have killed themselves as a show of support for Ocalan.

But all this does not mean that the PKK has a spotless record. Its members have killed civilians as ruthlessly as they have murdered Turkish security forces. It is also clear that the right timing and conditions, PKK members would have unleashed a wave of extremist actions, not only in Turkey, but throughout Europe to press their demands. Those conditions will be created if and when Ocalan is extradited to Turkey to face the death penalty, and all hell will break loose in Turkey and other countries hosting large Kurdish communities. As such, Ankara would be better advised to recognise that Ocalan's fate is not strictly an internal matter for Turkey.

Today's situation needs cool heads and a sense of compromise on both sides. Ankara should stop for a moment its one-way track policy of eliminating the PKK and its leaders and supporters. It should take a hard look at the demands of its Kurds. Similarly, the PKK should declare a total end to the use of arms as a means to achieve political rights, and renounce all slogans of separatism. That should pave the way for a common ground where the only shots heard would be those of dialogue that would first determine whether the Kurds' demands are legitimate and then tackle those demands in a manner satisfactory to all, while not posing any threat to the security and stability of not only Turkey, but also its neighbours who are also threatened by the Kurdish problem; countries including Syria, Iran and Iraq.

Furthermore, the question has to be raised — since it has become an accepted norm that terrorists are nowadays extradited from Khartoum to Paris and from Pakistan to Washington — if we have "good" terrorists and "bad" terrorists? Moreover, since Ocalan is an Alawite Kurd, why do the Syrian ruling Alawites adhere to the axiom of "golden silence"?

The Salah Eddin Ayyoubi society letter carried hundreds of Jordanian signatures requesting the Italian Government not to extradite Ocalan.

Out of Order

Brian Brown

A clockwork failure

THE NATURE of the problems afflicting various civilisations, past and present, has been a constant source of speculation throughout history. Many attempts have been made to identify and subsequently correct the causes of the ills preventing people from enjoying happy and secure lives, but sadly, most have failed. The Bible, for example, blamed money as "the root of all evil" in the period it was written, an unfortunate oversight since money, as we know it, was invented in the 7th century B.C. The logical conclusion, that "evil" did not exist before this time, must be dismissed in light of the genocidal exploits of the Israelites, Assyrians and Hittites, all of whom existed before the 7th century.

Our civilisation's elite, on the other hand, has already identified with 100 per cent certainty a far greater menace than money ever was, but the efforts under way to correct it may not be fully implemented in time. If this simmering crisis is not contained, it could spell the end of all that we know, cherish and need: mobile phones, credit cards, stock market trading from the comfort of your home and re-runs of "Dallas" on satellite TV. The problem is that millions of little silicon chips in almost every modern electrical appliance will not be able to tell the time correctly in less than two years.

Forget the stale old 1980's fears of nuclear holocaust, the environmentalists' warnings of ozone layer holes and melting glaciers, and trepidation over British beef. The Millennium Bug problem reduces these other concerns to idle afterthoughts of a slightly morose nature. The Millennium Bug problem, if not corrected before Dec. 31, 1999, will completely disrupt almost everything that relies on computer chips for operation. Many people, having grown up and lived their entire lives surrounded by

technology, do not truly grasp the extent to which computer chip technology has been integrated into even the most everyday items. If buying a can of soda from an automated vending machine becomes a challenge, imagine the difficulties that face the international finance sector or the airline industry.

The thing that many people find so upsetting about the Millennium Bug scenario, I believe, is that all of the equipment and its users will still be here. Nothing will explode or burn, large segments of the population will not die horrible deaths, and all of the expensive plastic items will not disappear in a flash of white light. It is precisely for this reason that any problems resulting from the Millennium Bug problem will be so troubling: everything will appear to be normal, but nothing will work. In a remarkable, and disturbing, demonstration of the fear that has already been created over the issue, a Silicon Valley engineer involved in means of fighting the bug's predicted effects was reported to have gone "insane," quit his job and become a survivalist, apparently because he had given up hope for an adequate solution to the problem being found.

The oddest thing, though, about the whole Millennium Bug problem is the fact that there is a problem at all. One has to ask why these scientists could not have contrived it that computer chips would be able to understand dates beyond the year 1999. Sure, there is an explanation that sounds plausible: technology was limited when computers first became used on a wide scale, precluding the inclusion of accurate timing mechanisms in the earlier computerised systems. But then other questions arise, such as why action wasn't taken to correct the problem earlier and the huge financial outlays that will be required to rectify the situation. I suppose it is possible that these were accidental

oversights, which I think, if it is actually the case, would prove once again that humanity itself creates most of the problems with which it must grapple. A different way of seeing the Millennium Bug, however, is the grandest example to date of consumer culture. Build an extremely expensive worldwide system that no one can afford to be without in a manner that guarantees its obsolescence within 20 years. Although a hideous waste of human and material resources, one has to admit that the whole setup, if my suspicions prove correct, is beautiful in a perverse way: Bill Gates, the corporations et al throwing away an entire disposable global system.

RECOMMENDED READING: A Clockwork Orange, by Anthony Burgess. Not for the weak of stomach. A Clockwork Orange is extremely violent, even more so than Stanley Kubrick's film of the same name. The novel's main character, Alex, is a 16-year-old thug who engages in repeated acts of "ultra-violence" before he himself is victimised at the hands of the state. There are a number of people who argue that this novel, due to its content, should be censored, and in fact the film version is banned in the U.K. This, in my point of view, is a mistaken policy, because removing critical coverage of societal phenomena (Burgess did not dream up the violence he describes in the novel) from the public domain is a form of escapism that ultimately results in ignorance and provincialism. This, of course, is solely my opinion and does not necessarily reflect the newspaper's editorial policy. What happens in the world may be unpleasant or nauseating, but to act as if everything is fine when it is not is a most disgusting reaction.



Compiled by
Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnist centred their attention last week on the stand-off between Iraq and the United States

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneek commented on the Iraqi crisis, and the hidden Arab agendas concerning the stand-off between the Iraqi leadership and the United States. President Clinton announced on CNN that most Arab countries in the region do not oppose a military strike against Iraq, yet Egypt ruled out the possibility of Arab support for any military action against Iraq, and the Saudi defence minister said that his country would not allow the U.S. to use its land as a base to strike Iraq. What is the truth, asked Faneek. People need to know the real positions of countries like Syria and Egypt. Do Syria and Egypt fear Iraq in the present and the future, asked the writer. The

Iraq in focus

Gulf states are not interested in a strike against Iraq, because they understand that Iraq does not pose a threat any more, and that they have to pay the bills for the attack from their own treasuries, added Faneek. Egypt receives \$2.2 billion in aid every year from the U.S., which could explain its double faced position. But Syria is a puzzle, said Faneek.

Al Ra'i's Raja Elleissa commented on President Clinton's latest speech during the latest debate in Iraq, in which Clinton declared that the United States had received support from all countries in the region to strike Iraq. Elleissa said the fear is that some Arab countries lie to their people while giving Washington the green light to launch military strikes against Iraq. If what Clinton said was true, then the Arab World can expect a bleak future, said the writer. The unity of the Arabs in their words and actions are the only things that may enable the Arab nation to overcome all conspiracies against it. The writer called on Arab countries to wake up and stand together to protect the Arab nation.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket said the Iraqi decision to resume cooperation with the United Nations was right, because Washington was determined to attack Iraq using hundreds of cruise missiles. What was strange, said Saket, was the American position, when Washington refused Iraq's letter to resume full cooperation with UNSCOM, and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call for a peaceful solution to the crisis. Saket said that the U.S. wanted to attack Iraq without U.N. approval, and charged that the world is currently led by the U.S. which steers it according to its own interests. Saket said that the American policy in the Arab World is reminiscent of the brutal measures employed by Portugal in countries it occupied.

Al Dustour's Masjed Abu Daiak said Iraq's decision to bow to the U.N. was a strong indication of the fragility of the Arabs, who are not able to stand up to American policies in the region. It also shows the negative impact of the Wye River deal brokered between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. The American decision to strike Iraq came days after the signing of the accord, when the Arab World was not in a position to say that the United States was not putting pressure on Israel to meet its obligations. The writer charged that the Iraq crisis is not finished and can be expected to flare up at any time. The Clinton administration wants to garner public support because of the nearing of the elections, said Daiak, and Iraq is an easy target. The writer called on Arab countries to hold a general Arab summit, even against U.S. wishes, in order to avoid what happened at Wye.

LETTERS

In the name of decency

To the editor:

TENS OF thousands of Asian women travel thousands of miles from their homes and families, to serve in homes in Jordan, receiving a pittance, which they nevertheless are thankful for due to want and poverty. Most of these women, are ill-educated, weak, alone and very vulnerable.

Quite often one hears stories of the ill-treatment and inhuman exploitation of these unfortunate human beings. The latest incident is that of the Sri Lankan National Subramaniam Kanagarani of 21 years, who was hospitalised for malnutrition and abuse by her employers. No one with any human feeling and decency, should tolerate that other human being is treated like this unfortunate Sri Lankan house help. Women's association here in Jordan should adopt a programme with official support to investigate the treatment of imported female labour to prevent the occurrence of abuse, considering that in Jordan they number in the tens of thousands. I very much encourage the embassy of Sri Lanka to take full legal measures and prosecute the family. No one should be allowed to tarnish the image of Jordanian society in such a manner.

Omar Abbas
Amman

Improving Amman

To the editor:

I HAVE been here in Jordan for nearly two years now and have become aware of many problems that Jordan faces. One such problem is that of road safety and accidents. Pedestrians here tend to walk in the road rather than on the pavement.

Why is this? In many areas the pavement cannot be used since it more resembles an obstacle course than a place to walk in safety. What obstacles are to be found? Trees [usually olives] at intervals of a few metres where the area left for the tree root is maybe as much as 50 per cent of the pavement width.

Why is this allowed? The trees are never trimmed so they grow, eventually blocking even a 5-metre wide path and frequently reaching into the road.

Why are they not trimmed? Pavements are frequently constructed with impossible differences in levels.

Why is this allowed? When pavements are dug up for attention to utilities they are rarely relaid and remain as broken stones or holes.

Why? Cars are parked anywhere on the pavement even in areas of high pedestrian traffic.

Why is this allowed? From the above it appears to me that both the city of Amman and any learned body of architects or civil engineers cannot or maybe do not recognise their duty. Who is responsible for trimming trees in public areas?

I suggest that the city employ people to trim all trees that grow in pavements. Where trees overhang property boundaries obstructing pavements, owners should do this or be expensively back-charged by the city for doing the job. Pavements should be examined across the city, some trees removed, others trimmed and an attempt made to make pavement levels easier to walk on.

Architects and civil engineers should prepare standards that the city should enforce on all new properties so that pavements become places to be used not avoided. Amman would be a much safer place to walk, there would be a reduction in accidents and a few more jobs would be created.

Robert W. Yardi
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The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Features

Refor

When finance ministers at the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington this weekend will discuss the global economic crisis, the agenda will feature prominently: The role of the IMF and the World Bank in the current global financial crisis. The IMF and the World Bank have been criticised for their role in the current global financial crisis. The IMF and the World Bank have been criticised for their role in the current global financial crisis.

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Reforming world finance: Lessons from a crisis

The IMF has recently come in for a lot of criticism for its handling of the current global financial crisis. Below, IMF First Deputy Managing Director Stanley Fischer, responds to critics.

WHEN FINANCE ministers and central bank governors gather in Washington this weekend for the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, the global economic crisis will dominate the agenda. The role of the IMF will come in for close examination. Three issues will feature prominently: The design of IMF-supported programmes in Asia and Russia, the international financial architecture, and how to respond to the immediate crisis without doing further damage to the international system. I consider these in turn.

The IMF programmes in Thailand, Indonesia, and Korea were designed to restore macroeconomic stability and growth, and to remedy structural weaknesses in each country. Early in each programme, interest rates had to be raised temporarily to stabilise currencies. That was achieved in South Korea and Thailand, whose currencies are now stable in ranges about 35-40 per cent below pre-crisis levels, with short-term interest rates of around 8-9 per cent, also below pre-crisis levels.

Those who criticised temporary high interest rates fail to see that further depreciation caused by lower rates would have raised the burden of dollar-denominated debts. And while the burdens imposed by higher interest rates were temporary, those created by deeper devaluations would have been permanent.

Thailand embarked on its IMF programme with a current account deficit of 8 per cent of GDP. To shrink that, the programme included an increase in the budget surplus of 3 per cent of GDP. Fiscal contractions suggested for Indonesia and Korea were smaller, designed to cover only the expected interest costs of financial restructuring. Had we known, when the Thai programme was signed in August 1997, that Asia, including Japan, was heading for major economic slowdown, less fiscal contraction would have been recommended.

As growth in Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia has slowed, the agreed fiscal deficit has increased; each country is running a sizeable deficit. More fiscal expansion, including additional social spending for the poor, would now make sense. The inclusion of structural measures in these programmes has been criticised. But financial and corporate inefficiencies were to the epicentre of the economic crisis and have to be dealt with to restore sustainable growth. Indeed, the priority now should be to complete restructuring. Some argue that because this will take a long time to have its effects, it was a mistake to try to move so rapidly. But delay does not make problems go away. As seen in Japan, it makes them worse.

Programme problems

If their design was right, why have the IMF programmes worked less well than hoped? There are two answers. First, governments were initially reluctant to implement them. In each of the three countries, the programme began to take hold and the currency to stabilise only after a new government took office. And, second, the external economic environment has worsened, due especially to the Japanese recession. The consequences have been most visible in the three countries' exports. Rapid export growth to the United States helped bring Mexico out of its 1994-95

crisis. This time, the value of exports from Thailand, Indonesia, and Korea to both Europe and America did indeed rise in the year to the second quarter, but the value of their exports to Japan has declined sharply, by about 25 per cent. So exports have not, so far, served as a source of growth.

Where do these countries stand today, a year after the start of their IMF programmes? Remember that the average U.S. recession lasts about a year, and that a year into the Mexican crisis, there was a period of severe jitters. There are important signs of progress in both Korea and Thailand, in the stabilisation of their currencies, the fall in interest rates and the start of bank and corporate debt restructuring. Growth could still resume this year, though much depends on the external environment. A year from now, each country is likely to be growing again and to have made more progress in structural reform than most of its neighbours — a good basis for sustainable recovery.

The problems in Indonesia are deeper, for the civil unrest that accompanied the end of the Suharto regime led in massive capital flight and a loss of investor confidence that will take time and careful political and economic management to repair. Critics blame the closing of 16 banks at the start of Indonesia's IMF programme for the collapse of the rupiah and investor confidence. But a careful look at the timing suggests the main culprits were President Suharto's illness in December, perceptions that the government would not carry out the programme, and excessive creation of liquidity by the central bank.

Indonesia has made some progress in recent months. The rupiah has strengthened, as foreign assistance has started flowing in. But attempts to keep food prices below world levels have failed, and rice prices have risen. So the government, with the assistance of the World Bank, is removing general subsidies on food and switching to the provision of subsidised rice and other essentials for the poor. A start has been made in dealing with the linked problems of internal and external corporate debt and the banking sector, though more needs to be done.

Russia's dance

Ever since 1992, the IMF has been the world's main vehicle for assisting Russia and promoting economic reform. This was difficult from the start, for reformers never had full control over economic policy. Nevertheless, the world's stake in Russian reform was too critical not to make the effort.

Some progress was made: The ruble was stabilised and inflation cut to single figures, and positive growth was recorded in 1997. On the structural side, privatisation took off. But little was done to restructure the military-industrial complex. And the government, unable to collect enough revenues, was often in arrears on wage and pension payments. The banking system was ill-regulated and heavily exposed in the risks of devaluation. And corruption was a huge problem for the economy and for foreign investors.

The extent of Russia's fiscal problem is hard to overstate. In 1997, federal tax receipts amounted in 9.7 per cent of GDP, less than \$4 billion a month. The budget deficit was 6.9 per cent of GDP. Since 1996, the Russian government has been in a race between its need to collect more taxes and a rising interest bill on its growing debt. This year, tax collection improved. In the second quarter, for the first time, federal revenues covered non-interest spending. But falling oil and commodity prices reduced export revenues, interest rates rose, and the government had to roll over \$1 billion a week of

GKO, or short-term ruble-denominated debt.

In July, the international community faced a hard choice: Whether to help Russia try to prevent devaluation. The adverse effects of a devaluation were clear, and the reformist Kirsyenko government was making progress on taxes and to other areas. So the decision was made in help, recognising that this was a calculated risk. An official package of \$22 billion was assembled, on condition that the Russians undertake major tax reforms; and a voluntary debt restructuring scheme for GKO holders to switch in longer-term dollar obligations was introduced.

The take-up of this offer was, however, small. The programme could still have been viable if GKO holders had been ready to roll over their maturing holdings. But after the Duma rejected two tax measures (though it passed most of the legislation submitted to it), and with doubts about the ability of the government to deliver on policy commitments growing, this did not happen. So the government was faced with an unenviable choice between devaluation, debt restructuring, or both. It chose both: The ruble was devalued, the GKO restructuring was imposed unilaterally, and a temporary moratorium was put on private debt payments.

The contagion following Russia's actions has been serious. The realisation that Russia was, after all, not too big to fail shook investor confidence — although it is hard to credit that sophisticated investors who had earned an average of 50 per cent a year on GKOs since 1994 really believed these investments were safe. Investors were concerned that other countries might follow suit and unilaterally restructure their debts, although almost all have rejected this.

Much of the contagion was caused by technical factors. Highly leveraged investors have had to realise assets to meet margin calls; investors seeking to move out of emerging markets have sold in the most liquid markets in raise cash. The shocks are now reaching rich-country markets too.

The new Russian government is in an extremely difficult situation. In the short run, it may employ a mixture of money printing and more controls. But these approaches will not work: sooner or later a Russian government will have to return to the tasks of stabilising and reforming the economy. At that point, the world may be able to re-engage financially. In the meantime, we should encourage the authorities to try to agree with creditors how to restructure the GKOs and how to lift the 90-day moratorium on private debt payments.

What went wrong in Russia? Fundamentally, although progress was made over the years, successive governments have been too weak to implement their desired policies. The international community, through the IMF, was right to try to support reform in Russia. And the IMF was right from early on to stress the need to sort out the fiscal mess. Eventually, as a weak internal situation combined with external shocks, the crisis came. Its effects will take time to overcome, but the story of Russian reform is not yet over.

There is no shortage of suggestions for reshaping the international financial system. Among the main ones are plans to strengthen national banking and financial systems; mechanisms to reduce contagion; capital controls; the need to minimise moral hazard; new exchange rate regimes; and reform of the IMF itself.

Banking weaknesses have either caused or aggravated all the recent crises. Most of these weaknesses were identified in advance by the IMF, but efforts to get countries to take pre-emptive action were not successful. The development of international banking standards — the Basel core principles — is an advance. But although we are starting to strengthen surveillance of banking systems, enforcement mechanisms are lacking. One option among others might be to impose

differential provisioning requirements against loans in different countries, depending on the standards met by their banking systems.

Containing contagion

The virulence of the recent contagion raises troubling questions about financial markets. Admittedly, contagion is rarely baseless: The markets treat countries in better shape more kindly than those in worse shape. Nonetheless, the technical factors contributing to contagion suggest it has been excessive — and that a way should be found to moderate it. That task will fall mainly to financial regulators, who should ensure greater transparency of positions being taken by investors, and consider when leverage can be excessive.

Fuller information should increase the efficiency of international capital flows. Through its Special Data Dissemination Standard, the IMF is prodding countries toward greater transparency. The standard needs strengthening, for instance by providing more timely data on foreign exchange reserves and complete data on forward transactions by central banks. We also need better information on short-term debt, on which the Bank for International Settlements and others are working.

Malaysia's decision to impose controls on capital outflows — and support for the idea among some academics — raises the question of whether such controls will once again become widespread. The IMF's position has long been that capital account liberalisation should proceed in an orderly way: Countries should lift controls on outflows only gradually as the balance of payments strengthens; liberalisation of inflows should start at the long end and move to the short end only as banking and financial systems are strengthened. We have not opposed Chilean-style, market-based measures to regulate capital inflows at the short end, but they must be considered case by case (Chile has recently eased its controls).

Yet, long experience shows that any short-term benefits that controls on outflows produce will be outweighed by their long-term disadvantages, as they encourage domestic evasion and capital flight and discourage foreign investors. After Malaysia's imposition of controls, other Asian countries have firmly rejected them, as has Latin America. We should, even so, recognise that the lure of isolation from the international system will increase unless market turbulence settles.

Next is the issue of moral hazard. It is hard to see evidence of this on the part of policymakers. Most countries do their utmost to avoid going to the IMF. The thornier issues arise on the side of investors. Some point to investors who take excessively risky positions on the back of an IMF safety net. Others are concerned that investors who should have paid a penalty may be bailed out by IMF lending.

These worries should now be mitigated as most investors in Asian countries, and especially investors to Russia who bet on the "moral hazard play," have taken very heavy losses. We need to balance concerns over moral hazard against the costs for the system of exacerbating instability by failing to assist countries in need. This issue is closely tied to the question of how to "bail in" the private sector (that is, get it to roll over its debt or provide new money rather than rushing for the exit). The IMF and other groups, including the G-22, are working on this high-priority problem.

We also again need to appraise exchange rate regimes for emerging market countries. The recent crises have all taken place in countries with fixed or

semi-fixed exchange rates. Yet, several countries, including Argentina, have benefited from a fixed rate; and currency crises also affect countries with flexible rates. The argument has been made that there are really only two stable exchange rate systems: A freely floating rate, or the adoption (perhaps via a currency board) of another country's currency. With the expected success of EMU (European economic and monetary union), more currency blocs may develop. But for now, we are in an uncomfortable in-between world in which floating rates are sometimes too volatile and fixed rates sometimes too vulnerable to attack.

Lastly, there is the question of reforming the IMF. Many of the changes discussed above will affect its role. There is also general support — including from the management of the IMF — for greater transparency in IMF operations. There has been much progress in recent years: more can be done, but only with the full support of the membership.

It is sometimes argued that the IMF is not accountable. That is not true. It is fully accountable to its membership, through the 24-member Executive Board that represents the 182 member countries. No loan or other big decision is taken without the Board's approval. Overall IMF policies are set by the 24-member Interim Committee, made up of finance ministers and central bank governors, which meets twice a year. Most complaints about accountability are really about transparency. If more details of IMF operations were published, there would be more room for appraisal by outsiders — which would be to the good.

What to do now

While work on the international financial architecture moves ahead to prevent the next crisis, we need urgently to contain the present one. Four steps are needed.

First, as the balance of risks in the international economy has shifted, so should the stance of monetary policy in the United States and Europe. The September 29 cut to U.S. interest rates is welcome news. It is also good that European central bankers have suggested that European rates should converge to the low levels in France and Germany rather than meet in the middle.

Second, Japan's continuing recession is a major problem, both for Japan and for the rest of the world. Rapid action in sort out its banks, and further fiscal stimulus, would go a long way to help Japan and the rest of Asia recover.

Third, the key to stopping the spread of the crisis is Latin America; and in Latin America it is Brazil. Latin American countries have made genuine progress to structural reforms this decade. They have reacted courageously to recent financial pressures by tightening monetary and fiscal policies. Brazil's President Cardoso has left no doubt that he will take more fiscal action after the election.

The international financial system, which has sustained the world economy through 50 years of growth and prosperity, needs reform to ensure that this continues — and that the mistakes of the 1930s are not repeated. For the IMF, which has had a central role in the system, to continue to play its part, it needs the support of its membership as it adapts in a changing world economy — and it urgently needs the quota increase.

(The views expressed in this article are those of the author. They are not necessarily shared by the International Monetary Fund's Executive Board)

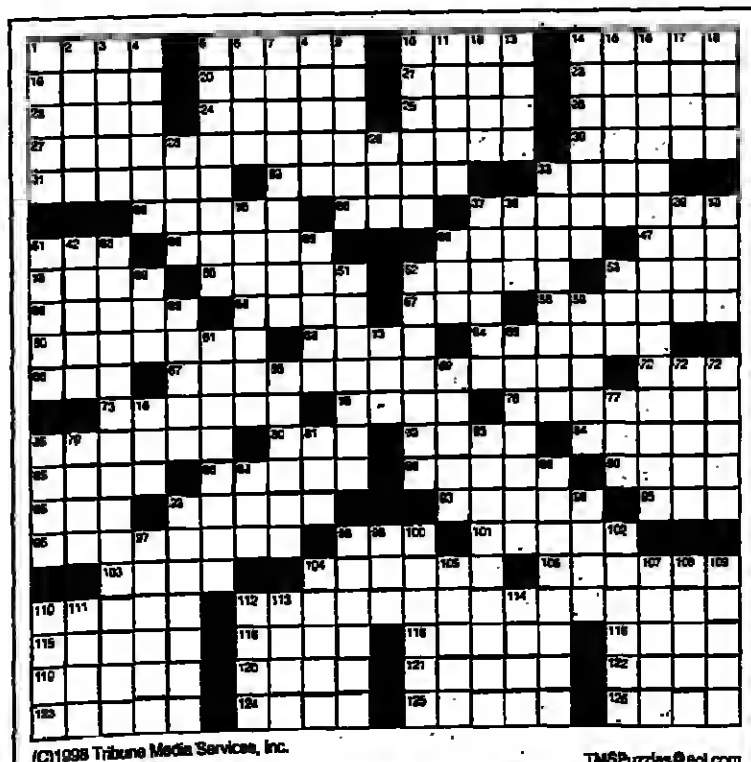
— The Economist

The Saturday Crossword

PUN AND GAMES

By Robert H. Wolfe, North Woodmore, New York

- ACROSS
- 1 Pirate's sister ship
 - 2 "JULIE" dramatist
 - 3 Served product
 - 4 Exhausted
 - 5 Wedding vows
 - 6 United
 - 7 Childhood taboo
 - 8 Willful destruction
 - 9 Young ice
 - 10 Medical ailment
 - 11 Machi Pichu
 - 12 Not accused
 - 13 Philanthropist with six pockets?
 - 14 Cigar droppings
 - 15 Not accused
 - 16 Half of Farmer Phil
 - 17 Ship's personnel
 - 18 Almond in Acapulco
 - 19 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
 - 20 Comedy
 - 21 Easy as
 - 22 Smith's surname
 - 23 David Semmel
 - 24 End of the road
 - 25 Cowardly Lion's portayer
 - 26 Chinese sounds
 - 27 File completely
 - 28 Former Russian ruler
 - 29 End of the line
 - 30 Enraged ewily
 - 31 Begat
 - 32 Well-honed skill
 - 33 More hackneyed
 - 34 Say the same thing again
 - 35 Hot chamber
 - 36 Old Testament
 - 37 Prophet
 - 38 Dope
 - 39 Tied off
 - 40 Frenchman?
 - 41 Musical gift
 - 42 Copper crag
 - 43 Stand on hind legs
 - 44 Riding
 - 45 Few and far between
 - 46 End of the line
 - 47 Playwright's nail
 - 48 Whimper
 - 49 Type of
 - 50 Mountains
 - 51 Indifferent person
 - 52 Flat name of 48A
 - 53 Branch
 - 54 Actor Alan
 - 55 Unhappy things
 - 56 Inhabitant: abb.
 - 57 Split into splinters
 - 58 Baked out



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- DOWN
- 1 Japanese monarchy
 - 2 Senescent person
 - 3 Untrue
 - 4 Not of the head
 - 5 Farm income producer
 - 6 Memo acronym
 - 7 Actress on horseback?
 - 8 Poem postscript
 - 9 Dances: Ruby
 - 10 "Year Gyr" dancer
 - 11 Bizarre
 - 12 Allow ending?
 - 13 Better
 - 14 Knights' tunics
 - 15 Egyptian birds
 - 16 Doctor of cards?
 - 17 Female family of art patrons
 - 18 Former Tunisian ruler
 - 19 Old-time singer
 - 20 Albi guy
 - 21 Glass objects
 - 22 Of a Syrian religious sect
 - 23 Period of "trinity" something
 - 24 Unclouded cloud
 - 25 "Dad"
 - 26 Henry VIII's last
 - 27 Catharine
 - 28 Cause: erotoly
 - 29 Moderated
 - 30 1964 Oscar winner?
 - 31 Flynn of film
 - 32 Golf score
 - 33 More than two
 - 34 Game-show gambler?
 - 35 Aunt in Alcatraz
 - 36 Grand film
 - 37 Brooks in Indy
 - 38 Larceny
 - 39 Compass pt.
 - 40 Gathered together
 - 41 Musical composition
 - 42 Open a castle door
 - 43 People who deal with Attia
 - 44 Fanatical
 - 45 Keenly perceptive
 - 46 Attack
 - 47 Health resorts
 - 48 Sound of rippling
 - 49 H.S. Junior's exam
 - 50 Refresh
 - 51 Slot films
 - 52 Spanish river
 - 53 Darsdevi Kriev

Old Cairo faces future as 'time machine'

By Emad Mekay
Reuters

THE WOODEN door and lattice windows of the 15th century walled bazaar in Cairo's old city shook as Adel Hegazy hammered copper sheets and apprentices ferried them in stacks in and out of his shop.

The 49-year-old blacksmith brushed off the fact that his workshop at Weklat Qaitbay is on a list of buildings scheduled for relocation from historic sites in mediaeval Cairo.

"We are causing no harm to the monuments," said Hegazy. "I inherited this place from my father who inherited it from my grandfather. We have been here for ages." The government wants to relocate hundreds of workshops, offices, schools, homes and shops which it says encroach illegally on areas classified as antiquities in the heart of Cairo.

The U.N. Development Programme helped prepare a plan last year to rehabilitate the area's rich jumble of ancient mosques, Islamic schools, fountains, synagogues and Coptic churches.

The cabinet activated the plan to turn the district into an open-air museum last month after a fire that began in a pile of rubbish gutted the 18th century palace of Musafir Khanna.

Other potential fire hazards abound, such as the wooden food crates piled high in the 500-year-old Housh Anai courtyard.

Antiquities officials say seepage from 19th century sewage and water pipes is eroding the foundations of many old structures, which were also rocked by a 1992

Regional

earthquake. Power cables hang from houses in the narrow streets. Women make tea on gas burners and laundry flaps from the walls of the 14th century Besh-taq palace.

Cars clog the old city, whose widest street, Al-Moez, is just eight metres (yards) across and more than 1,000 years old.

The authorities have noted more than 200 violations at 108 historic sites to just two areas of Old Cairo, Gamalia and Moez, and have surveyed all the district's 300 listed landmarks.

"We are talking about complete rehabilitation of the whole area, the sites, streets, cars, environment," said Gaballah Ali Gaballah, secretary general of the Supreme Council for Antiquities.

"Professors that are harmless to the environment, like jewellers or woodworkers, of course will stay. But if there are

harmful professions like blacksmiths or aluminium (welders) this is going to be moved," Gaballah added.

Work has started on a tunnel, scheduled to be completed in three years, to divert traffic from the heavily populated area around the Hussein and Azhar mosques.

Abdallah Al-Attar, head of Coptic and Islamic Antiquities, said workshops may be allowed to stay put if they switch to tourist-friendly activities such as selling souvenirs.

"After the plan is fully carried out, the area would be like a time machine from the American movies. We'd take people back into past centuries," Attar enthused.

Attar said the project would cost \$250 million which the government hopes to raise from tourism revenue and aid from international organisations.

"There are just two main obstacles facing implementation of the plan. First, money. Second, spreading awareness of the value of such antiquities among the population," said Ragai Hussein, head of Coptic and Islamic antiquities in North Cairo.

He also cited the tangle of overlapping authorities

and government organisations responsible for aspects of the project.

The Supreme Council for Antiquities wants to take over the sites from the Religious Endowments Ministry, which Attar said controls 95 per cent of 650 mediaeval sites throughout Cairo.

Tenants, some of whom have occupied the sites for generations, pay as little as five pounds a month in rent.

"It is such a frustrating situation," said Attar. "We are supervising what we do not own. But we are trying." The Cairo governorate is charged with building alternative housing. It plans to relocate displaced citizens in Manshiyet Nasser, a north-eastern suburb bordering the desert.

Hussein said lack of awareness about the value of the monuments among Old Cairo dwellers, many of them uneducated, was a major hindrance to the plan and to the inspectors' work.

"We create police files for those who encroach on the monuments," he said. "People react by hating the monuments. They call them just piles of stones that upset their lives." Hegazy, hammering in his sooty smock, is concerned more with daily survival than with the relics of the past.

"This is where I work to feed my children. I will resist evacuation. Are monuments and tourists more important than us?"

Jordan to attend conference on new aid to Palestinians

Rubin said, "We do hope to substantially increase that amount in the coming years."

alisation, whom it did not name, were seeking the resignation of Economy Minister Hossein Namazi, who reportedly favoured a slower pace of


Two executives join Marriott Hotel

name, were seeking the resignation of Economy Minister Hossein Namazi, who reportedly favours a slower pace of reform to protect the poor.

As the conservative *Abrar* newspaper put it: "How can we expect a positive result when there are certain officials in the government who do not believe in the government's official economic policies?"²¹

In 1997, he moved to the Riyadh Marriott Hotel to assume the position of Sales Manager there, and then became Senior Sales Manager at the same hotel. Now, after spending three years in Saudi Arabia, Osama has come back to work with the Armanian Marriott. He will be responsible for local corporate customers, as well as businessmen from the Gulf


Peanuts



I CAN'T STAND IT.

Schulz

Andy Capp



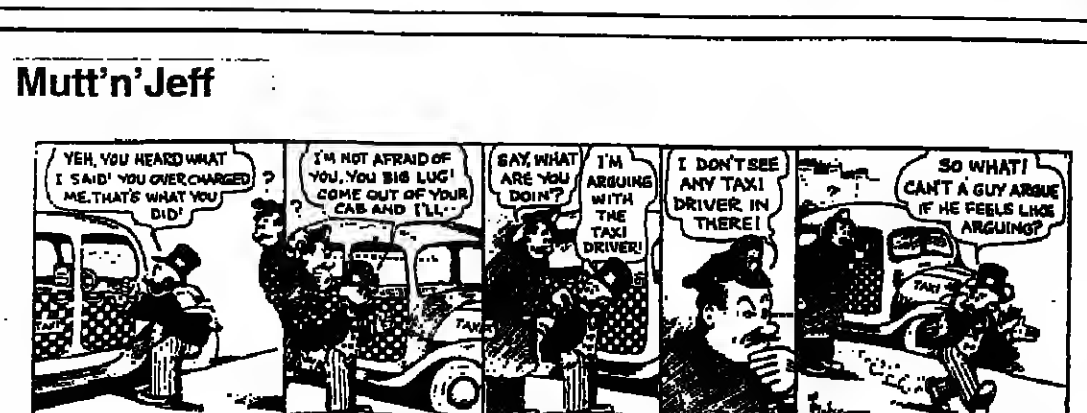
I'LL HAVE TO TELL HER EVERYTHING, OTHERWISE I JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF...

ABOUT TONIGHT, PET, I'M AFRAID IT ISN'T A VERY PLEASANT STORY, BUT...

SO KEEP IT SHORT AND JUST TELL ME LIES

Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



YEH, YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID? YOU OVERCHARGED ME, THAT'S WHAT YOU DID?

I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, YOU BIG LUG! COME OUT OF YOUR CAS AND I'LL...

SAY, WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'? I'M ARGUING WITH THE TAXI DRIVER!

I DON'T SEE ANY TAXI DRIVER IN THERE!

SO WHAT! CAN'T A GUY ARGUE IF HE FEELS LIKE ARGUING?

Mutt'n'Jeff

[illegible]

...to what worked before.
...skills and in so doing acqui
...to work out. You'll see.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Government shelve exempting production inputs from customs duties because of high deficit

**** DUE TO** the big deficit in the budget, estimated at eight per cent of the gross domestic product, a decision on exempting production inputs from customs has been postponed until further notice, government sources said. The sources indicated that the treasury cannot take an expected JD125 million in deficit as a result of exempting the production inputs from customs.

A committee looking into the issue of exemption has previously approved the final lists of the types of inputs proposed

for exemptions and specified the percentage of protection on the inputs on the basis of the volume of production, its type and value added. According to the findings of the committee, a total of 2,200 inputs should be exempted from customs.

Raising the sales tax was a proposal floated to plug the gap that would result from the exemption but this suggestion is facing wide opposition from some commercial and industrial segments (Al Aswaq).

Petra, Aqaba hotels flourish

**** THE OCCUPANCY** rate at Aqaba hotels during the four-day holiday last week was 100 per cent as large number of people opted to spend the vacation in Aqaba, tourism sources said. "Many people were not able to make hotel reservation and were forced to rent apartments or stay on the beaches," the sources added.

Petra also witnessed high influx of tourists and visitors with the occupancy rate at the hotels reaching 80 per cent. The sources said a total of 3,126 Jordanians visited Petra

between Nov. 12 and Nov. 16 while the number of foreign tourists was 6,598. Fees collected from the foreign tourists totalled JD134,700.

Most of the "internal tourism" was in general to the southern region of the Kingdom but thousands of Jordanians also chose to spend a one-day vacation, either in the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea shore and Jerash, without an overnight stay at any of these places (Al Ra'i).

New industries push up electricity consumption

**** THE KINGDOM** will face a severe shortage in electricity generation during the coming five years if new units are not installed in case a source of natural gas is supplied, an official source at the National Electricity Company has said. He indicated that electricity consumption in the country has witnessed an extraordinary increase that reached a 10 per cent growth instead of six per cent as planned. The source attributed the rise in electricity consumption to a large number of

industries starting operations. He said the electrical power generation from the company's stations will reach 6,332 gigawatt per hour this year, a 7.2 per cent growth over the previous year. The growth rate will rise by 6.3 per cent to reach 6,731 gigawatt per hour in 1999 and by 6.8 per cent to 7,189 in the year 2000. Until 2005, the power generation is expected to be 7,564 in 2001, 7,946 in 2002, 8,279 in 2003, 8,631 in 2004 and 8,971 gigawatt hours in 2005 (Al Dustour).

Holiday attracts investors away from stock market

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN—Trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) declined by 23.8 in the past week with the price index recording its lowest level in more than 18 months, Naim Nageeb, a broker, said Friday.

He explained that the decline in the turnover was due to the three-day holiday during which investors "preferred to stay away from the market and postpone their activities until the coming week."

The weekly bulletin showed the turnover during the past week at JD3.5 million compared to JD4.6

million. The average daily turnover was JD1.1 million during the two-day trading compared to five days in the previous week.

The price index closed at 159.46, the lowest level this year, compared to 160.61 points in the previous week. The price index of the banking, industrial and insurance sectors declined by 1.18, 1.31 and 0.17 points respectively whereas the price index of the services sector increased by 0.24 points, the bulletin said.

On Tuesday, the opening day of trading following the three-day holiday, recorded the lowest price level in

more than 18 months. Nageeb said.

The broker expected trading in the market to improve this week when trading in the shares of the Jordan Cement Factories Company will resume.

"The deal between the cement firm and the French company Lafarge will bring the attention of investors to the mining shares, especially those of the potash and phosphate companies," Nageeb told the Jordan Times.

The banking sector ranked first with a total of JD2.8 million, or 80.7 per cent of the turnover. Share prices of four banks rose

and four others recorded declines out of 12 banks whose shares were traded.

Trading in this sector focused on the Arab Bank, the major blue chip in the country, as it won 71.7 per cent of the turnover followed by the Philadelphia and Hnusing banks, the broker said.

The industrial sector ranked second with JD650,000, or 18.4 per cent of the turnover. Shares of 27 firms changed hands in this sector but only 10 recorded increases in their prices and six registered declines.


Shares of the Arab Potash Company and Jordan Phos-

phate Mines Company won the attention of the investors in the industrial sector. Both firms won 5.9 per cent of the turnover. Nageeb added.

The services sector accounted for JD29,000 and the insurance sector for JD2,000, as shares of nine firms were traded.

The parallel market won 7.5 per cent of the total turnover, Nageeb said.

Out of the 70 firms that were traded in the floor, 24 companies recorded increase in their share prices, 15 decreased and 31 firms recorded no change in their prices.

| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------|---------|------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------|--------|---------------|--------|---------------|---------------------|
| HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TELEPHONE: 407271 / 407279 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/11/1998 - 18/11/1998) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WEEKLY REPORT | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS | COMPANY NAME | P/B | DIV | NO. OF CONTRACTS | NO. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED | OPENING PRICE | HIGH | LOW | CLOSING PRICE | CHANGE | AVERAGE PRICE | NO. OF TRADING DAYS |
| 208,080 | 240,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 208,080 | 240,000 ARAB BANK | 74.7 | .98 | 51 | 12260 | 2525235 | 205.00 | 207.00 | 203.00 | 204.00 | -1.00 | 206.788 | 229 |
| 7,720 | 1,510 JOR. NATIONAL BK. | 12.2 | 4.62 | 5 | 2824 | 5202 | 1.52 | 1.53 | 1.51 | 1.52 | - | 1.518 | 100 |
| 1,080 | 1,040 BANK OF JORDAN | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8 | 20142 | 32353 | 1.08 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.07 | .01 | 1.070 | 144 |
| 1,010 | 1,960 JOR. EAST INV. BK. | 42.7 | 0.00 | 2 | 10000 | 9700 | .97 | .97 | .97 | .97 | - | .970 | 100 |
| 1,490 | 1,420 INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK. | 9.9 | 7.20 | 2 | 400 | 548 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 1.42 | - | 1.420 | 100 |
| 2,910 | 2,410 THE HOUSING BK. | 17.2 | 2.70 | 55 | 28798 | 77632 | 2.72 | 2.74 | 2.68 | 2.70 | -.02 | 2.696 | 239 |
| 1,950 | 1,450 JOR. KUWAIT BANK | 7.0 | 0.00 | 4 | 1247 | 2252 | 1.49 | 1.48 | 1.47 | 1.48 | -.01 | 1.472 | 100 |
| 2,450 | 580 JOR. GULF BANK | - | 0.00 | 42 | 22000 | 21288 | .45 | .49 | .45 | .49 | -.04 | .468 | 140 |
| 2,160 | 2,100 ARAB JOR. INV. BK. | 45.1 | 2.30 | 2 | 200 | 651 | 2.10 | 2.17 | 2.17 | 2.17 | -.07 | 2.170 | 100 |
| 1,410 | 1,500 JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 15.7 | 0.00 | 19 | 3795 | 5872 | 1.53 | 1.54 | 1.52 | 1.54 | -.01 | 1.524 | 117 |
| 490 | 460 BETH. AL-HAL. INDUSTRIAL | 2.3 | 0.00 | 2 | 1000 | 870 | .67 | .67 | .67 | .67 | - | .670 | 100 |
| 1,420 | 550 PHILADEL. INV. BK. | 874.0 | 0.00 | 16 | 24040 | 152371 | .55 | .59 | .54 | .57 | -.02 | .577 | 240 |
| BANKS SECTION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2,750 | 2,450 JOR. FRENCH LEASING | 7.4 | 9.19 | 2 | 500 | 1260 | 2.75 | 2.72 | 2.72 | 2.72 | -.02 | 2.720 | 100 |
| INSURANCE SECTION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1,450 | 1,410 JOR. ELECTRIC PAR. | 9.2 | 5.81 | 12 | 2240 | 3181 | 1.41 | 1.43 | 1.41 | 1.42 | -.01 | 1.420 | 111 |
| 9,000 | 9,000 JOR. HOTEL TOURISM | 22.8 | 0.00 | 2 | 532 | 4549 | 9.00 | 9.55 | 8.55 | 8.55 | -.45 | 8.551 | 111 |
| 1,390 | 1,000 SHIPPING LINE | 37.1 | 7.42 | 1 | 950 | 998 | 1.08 | 1.05 | 1.05 | 1.05 | -.02 | 1.052 | 111 |
| 2,450 | 320 JORDAN TRVL. TRAD. | - | 0.00 | 2 | 400 | 104 | .26 | .24 | .24 | .26 | - | .260 | 100 |
| 5,220 | 5,100 ALARA? | 2.8 | 7.81 | 5 | 10000 | 5111 | 5.10 | 5.12 | 5.11 | 5.22 | -.02 | 5.121 | 103 |
| 1,040 | 1,040 JOR. EAST HOTELS | 197.5 | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 1030 | 1.04 | 1.03 | 1.01 | 1.03 | -.01 | 1.030 | 100 |
| 1,990 | 1,840 ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC. | 9.3 | 2.13 | 8 | 2410 | 4876 | 1.84 | 1.80 | 1.86 | 1.88 | -.02 | 1.869 | 113 |
| 860 | 810 ARAB EDUCATION | 28.7 | 0.00 | 4 | 1450 | 1227 | .81 | .81 | .81 | .82 | - | .810 | 102 |
| 1,110 | 1,000 UNIPIC CO. | 4.8 | 10.19 | 5 | 1050 | 1127 | 2.08 | 1.08 | 1.07 | 1.08 | - | 1.072 | 103 |
| SERVICES SECTION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1,100 | 1,100 ATTACHE | - | 0.00 | 7 | 37886 | 14675 | 1.10 | 1.10 | 1.10 | 1.20 | - | 1.100 | 3352 |
| 1,240 | 1,020 JOR. PROSPECTOR MINES | 12.4 | 0.00 | 72 | 77300 | 83418 | 1.05 | 1.09 | 1.04 | 1.08 | -.02 | 1.079 | 176 |
| 3,480 | 3,250 ARAB POTASH CO. | 15.7 | 6.29 | 4 | 28852 | 123591 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.10 | 3.28 | -.17 | 3.181 | 147 |
| 10,400 | 10,070 JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 9.9 | 8.71 | 12 | 790 | 8089 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.19 | 10.20 | -.05 | 10.239 | 112 |
| 1,180 | 1,020 INDUSTRIAL COM. CORP. | 60.3 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 102 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | - | 1.020 | 100 |
| 5,450 | 5,500 JOR. MORTGAGE BANK | 7.2 | 3.66 | 1 | 600 | 2360 | 5.50 | 5.50 | 5.50 | 5.50 | - | 5.500 | 115 |
| 2,440 | 2,410 ARAB FARM. MARK. | 6.9 | 2.99 | 5 | 11046 | 27674 | 2.49 | 2.57 | 2.49 | 2.51 | -.03 | 2.501 | 163 |
| 1,030 | 1,000 JOR. CHEMICAL IND. | 4.4 | 9.80 | 1 | 1000 | 1020 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | - | 1.020 | 100 |
| 1,950 | 1,850 JOR. PAPER CARDBO. | 11.5 | 0.00 | 2 | 600 | 796 | 1.85 | 2.04 | 1.94 | 2.06 | -.19 | 1.990 | 113 |
| 5,200 | 5,050 DAN ALDAM. INV. FUND | 8.0 | 2.06 | 7 | 2600 | 11992 | 5.10 | 5.01 | 6.67 | 4.97 | -.12 | 4.997 | 140 |
| 1,770 | 1,710 ARAB ALUM. IND. | 12.2 | 25.15 | 2 | 1400 | 2230 | 1.71 | 1.67 | 1.65 | 1.65 | -.06 | 1.646 | 123 |
| 1,200 | 1,200 LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 22.5 | 0.00 | 2 | 2250 | 828 | .27 | .27 | .26 | .27 | - | .268 | 108 |
| 3,360 | 3,200 GENERAL INVESTMENT | 16.6 | 2.33 | 3 | 6000 | 32800 | 2.20 | 2.20 | 2.20 | 2.20 | - | 2.200 | 157 |
| 1,200 | 290 INTERMED. PETRO. CORP. | - | 0.00 | 2 | 1250 | 292 | .29 | .29 | .29 | .29 | - | .290 | 102 |
| 1,950 | 1,000 UNIVERCE INVEST. | 10.1 | 8.08 | 9 | 2500 | 2481 | 1.00 | 1.00 | .99 | .99 | -.01 | .992 | 147 |
| 1,450 | 1,450 NATL. CABLE WIRE-WIRE | 38.0 | 0.00 | 2 | 2500 | 1400 | .44 | .44 | .44 | .44 | - | .440 | 102 |
| 1,270 | 1,200 JOR. SULPHUR-CHEN | 6.6 | 0.00 | 11 | 3200 | 1088 | .36 | .36 | .36 | .36 | - | .360 | 171 |
| 1,240 | 1,150 ARAB PHARM. CORP. | 12.8 | 5.17 | 9 | 1750 | 2018 | 1.15 | 1.16 | 1.15 | 1.16 | -.01 | 1.152 | 105 |
| 1,620 | 580 UNIV. MOD. TRNS. | 9.4 | 10.37 | 12 | 4800 | 3938 | .59 | .59 | .59 | .59 | - | .590 | 102 |
| 1,470 | 1,270 JOR. INFO. RESOURCES | - | 0.00 | 52 | 40127 | 23560 | .27 | .27 | .27 | .27 | - | .274 | 160 |
| 1,430 | 1,400 JOR. NEW CABLE CO. | 8.5 | 16.67 | 2 | 7200 | 4279 | .60 | .59 | .60 | .59 | -.01 | .596 | 190 |
| 1,180 | 1,100 EL. INT. READY WEAR | 37.7 | 0.00 | 6 | 9806 | 10542 | 1.10 | 1.08 | 1.07 | 1.07 | -.02 | 1.075 | 121 |
| 1,140 | 1,050 BETH. TOBACCO | 7.7 | 5.30 | 18 | 14050 | 15422 | 1.08 | 1.10 | 1.08 | 1.10 | -.02 | 1.098 | 117 |
| 990 | 920 UNION CH. & VEG. | 10.4 | 0.00 | 2 | 59 | 55 | .94 | .96 | .94 | .94 | - | .923 | 101 |
| 870 | 850 JORDAN STEEL | 9.5 | 8.25 | 15 | 7800 | 4587 | .86 | .86 | .84 | .88 | -.01 | .866 | 124 |
| 690 | 450 NAKH. ALUMINIUM | 32.2 | 0.00 | 5 | 2600 | 2404 | .44 | .47 | .46 | .47 | -.01 | .468 | 140 |
| 560 | 520 BLDG. EAST COMPLEX | 9.4 | 0.00 | 5 | 11500 | 4095 | .52 | .52 | .52 | .53 | -.01 | .520 | 152 |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 317 | 317 TOTAL | 71.412 | 236.768 | 159.46 | 6.717 | | | | | | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 599 | 714912 | 2366768 | 159.46 | 6.717 | | | | | | | | | |
| DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 810 | 800 EXPORT & PH. ENK. TS/ | 14.8 | 0.00 | 8 | 4500 | 2465 | .80 | .80 | .79 | .80 | - | .800 | 122 |
| 810 | 810 JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 300 | 202 | .81 | .77 | .74 | .74 | -.07 | .755 | 110 |
| 1,400 | 1,050 ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO | 14.7 | 0.00 | 1 | 250 | 375 | 1.44 | 1.50 | 1.50 | 1.50 | -.04 | 1.500 | 100 |
| 380 | 350 JOR. TRAVE. FAC. | - | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 35 | .35 | .35 | .35 | .35 | - | .350 | 100 |
| 590 | 510 UNION INV. | - | 0.00 | 13 | 8749 | 4956 | .51 | .51 | .51 | .51 | -.02 | .509 | 175 |
| 580 | 540 AL-DAMILAT | 32.0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 560 | .54 | .54 | .54 | .54 | - | .540 | 100 |
| 1,000 | 720 CENTURY INV. GROUP | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1 | 710 | 713 | .71 | .71 | .71 | .71 | - | .710 | 100 |
| 210 | 200 ARAB INTL. INV. TRD. | 22.0 | 0.00 | 9 | 3500 | 7140 | .20 | .20 | .20 | .20 | - | .200 | 714 |
| 2,290 | 2,980 ARAB STEEL PIPES | 27.5 | 2.88 | 4 | 500 | 1725 | 2.79 | 2.79 | 2.79 | 2.79 | -.21 | 2.450 | 108 |
| 490 | 470 NICEAST PHARM. IND. | - | 0.00 | 19 | 12196 | 5070 | .48 | .50 | .48 | .50 | -.02 | .496 | 135 |
| 2,240 | 2,100 UNION TOBACCO | 12.5 | 6.35 | 8 | 3216 | 8291 | 2.20 | 2.25 | 2.22 | 2.25 | -.05 | 2.221 | 105 |
| 540 | 500 ADVANCED PHARM. IND. | 0.00 | 0.00 | 9 | 7518 | 3918 | .53 | .53 | .53 | .53 | - | .530 | 100 |
| 220 | 200 JORD. ENG. | - | 0.00 | 5 | 11003 | 3310 | .21 | .21 | .21 | .21 | - | .210 | 157 |
| 140 | 140 T. BATH. MANUF. | - | 0.00 | 2 | 184 | 25 | .14 | .14 | .14 | .14 | - | .140 | 100 |
| 280 | 280 PEARL SH. P. CONV. | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1 | 500 | 140 | .28 | .28 | .28 | .28 | - | .280 | 112 |
| 540 | 540 NATL. POLIPLY | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3 | 8272 | 3085 | .54 | .54 | .54 | .54 | - | .540 | 100 |
| 280 | 280 OPTICALS BEARING CO. | 161.7 | 0.00 | 8 | 27900 | 7850 | .33 | .33 | .32 | .33 | - | .320 | 179 |
| 770 | 490 PEARL SH. CONCRETE | 8.5 | 0.00 | 2 | 850 | 499 | .78 | .79 | .78 | .79 | -.03 | .768 | 119 |
| 700 | 610 BUTIRAN | 1699.2 | 0.00 | 5 | 3020 | 1247 | .65 | .65 | .65 | .65 | - | .650 | 102 |
| 740 | 710 AL. BUL. PRINTING CO. | 31.2 | 10.24 | 25 | 21600 | 156574 | .72 | .74 | .73 | .74 | -.02 | .731 | 245 |
| 240 | 230 NATL. IND. PET. MARKCO | - | 0.00 | 28 | 21900 | 55070 | .24 | .24 | .24 | .24 | - | .240 | 797 |

Graf outlasts Seles to reach Chase semis

NEW YORK (AFP) — Steffi Graf remained unbeaten in her return from injury Thursday, rallying for a 1-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Monica Seles in the quarter-finals of the \$2 million Chase Championships.

Graf, 29 and a five-time winner of the WTA Tour's season finale, looked headed for an early exit when she dropped the first set in just 24 minutes.

But over the next two sets she engaged the fifth-seeded American in a baseline slugfest worthy of Madison Square Garden, her lethal forehand finally making the difference in the one hour, 47 minute match.

"I thought it was an unbelievable match. She came out hitting extremely well in the first set. I didn't know what to do," Graf said.

"I tried to hang in and keep the ball in play," said Graf, who advances to the semifinals to meet the winner of Friday's match between top-seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States and eighth seed Nathalie Tauziat of France.

Seles refused to go down easy, fighting off four match points in the 10th game of the third set before hitting a forehand wide. She dropped to 4-9 all-time against Graf.

The crowd of 13,023, the largest of the tournament so far, was appreciative of the effort of the two players, vociferously cheering each player in the third set and giving both a lengthy ovation when the battle ended.



Monica Seles

"The third set was some great tennis. The atmosphere in the third set was tremendous," Graf added. Overcoming the effects of food poisoning, Seles reached the quarter-finals on Wednesday with a straight-set win over slumping Russian teenager Anna Kournikova. Graf took advantage of a cramping Jana Novotna and eliminated the defending champion Tuesday night.

In the day's early match, Irina Spirela of Romania knocked off Dominique Van Roost of Belgium 6-2, 6-3 to advance to the semifinals. Both players had been idle since Monday, when they pulled off upsets of seeded Spaniards. Seles, who became sick from a meal in Philadelphia and spent all of Monday and the better part of Tuesday in bed

recovering, needed just 65 minutes Wednesday for her first win in Madison Square Garden since capturing her third straight title in 1992.

Before Thursday, the 24-year-old Seles had won 11 of her last 13 matches since falling to Martina Hingis in the quarter-finals of the U.S. Open.

Graf entered this week having won back-to-back tournaments in Germany and Philadelphia. It was her first meeting with Seles since winning in the final of the 1996 U.S. Open, and their first meeting before a final since the fourth round of Wimbledon in 1989.

Spirela, who eliminated fourth seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in straight sets, needed just 55 minutes to bounce Van Roost as she played near-perfect tennis. She broke Van Roost's serve four times and committed just nine unforced errors.

Van Roost, a seven-year veteran who beat number seven Conchita Martinez in her tournament debut, had 20 unforced errors and failed to convert her lone break opportunity.

Spirela will face the winner of Friday's quarter-final between sixth-seeded Mary Pierce of France and the second-seeded Hingis.

On Wednesday, Pierce lost just one game in overpowering Amanda Coetzer of South Africa. Pierce has been hot of late, winning back-to-back titles last month at the Ladies Kremlin Cup and Seat Open to give her four titles in 1998.

Nominees announced for Athlete of the Year award

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — Three American men are among the 10 nominations for the International Amateur Athletic Federation Athlete of the Year award to be announced Sunday.

Hurdler Bryan Bronson, shot put and discus thrower John Godina and 200 and 400m star Michael Johnson are among those in contention.

The other nominations are: Ato Boldon (Trin) 100m/200m, Ronaldo Da Costa (Bra) marathon/half marathon, Jonathan Edwards (Gbr) triple jump, Hicham El Guerrouj (Mar) 1500m/mile, Frank Fredericks (Nam) 100m/200m, Haile Gebrselassie (Eth) 3000m/5000m/10,000m, Paul Tergat (Ken) 10,000m, cross country, half marathon.

The women's nominations are: Glory Alozie (Ngr) 100m hurdles, Christine Arron (Fra) 100m/200m, Heike Drechsler (Ger) long jump, Emma George (Aus) pole vault, Marion Jones (USA) 100m/200m, long jump, Tegla Loroupe (Ken) marathon/half marathon, Svetlana Masterkova (Rus) 800m/1500m/mile, Maria Mniola (Moz) 800m, Sonia O'Sullivan (Irl) 1500m/5000m/10,000m/cross country, Gabriela Szabo (Rom) 5000m/10,000m.

No fewer than 10 nationalities are represented among these female nominations and eight nationalities among the men. The winners will be decided Saturday at the meeting of the council of the IAAF and announced on Sunday.

Sri Lanka dismisses Chinese opposition to Jayasinghe

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's Amateur Athletic Association on Friday said its star sprinter and Asia's fastest woman Susanthika Jayasinghe will compete at the Asian Games despite Chinese opposition to her participation.

"Any country can say anything but as far as we are concerned Susanthika will run at the Asian Games," AAA President Ari Kannangara told AFP. "Our job is to make sure that she gets all the facilities necessary to compete."

Kannangara said the AAA rejected claims by Chinese officials that a drug ban on Jayasinghe was still active and that she will not be able to compete at the games, which open in Bangkok on December 6.

The world governing body of athletics, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), has reportedly proposed to let Jayasinghe carry on competing but wants to refer her drug failure in April to an arbitration commission.

Jayasinghe, 23, said she was demoralised and considered pulling out of the games after Chinese officials recently claimed she

was still banned after failing a drug test in April.

She was back at the track Thursday and was training for the Asian Games after she was told she could still compete because an IAAF-initiated panel cleared her of drug charges by a 2-1 decision.

Jayasinghe, who took the silver medal in the women's 200 metres at the last world championships, said she was "pleased" and "relieved" about a proposal by the international governing body so she could run in Bangkok.

A formal announcement is expected during an IAAF executive meeting in Monaco.

But officials have warned it would mean Jayasinghe would lose any medals won at the Asian Games if the arbitration decision went against her. Sri Lankan officials said an arbitration process could be time consuming.

"I am very very happy that this whole matter has now been cleared by the IAAF," Jayasinghe said. "Now I will concentrate on training."



Minoru Takenchi (C.#13) of Japan spikes the ball over Spanish defenders Jose Luis Molto (L.#14) and Miguel Angel Falasca (R.#7), during a game of the Pool G quarterfinal round at the men's World Volleyball Championships in Hiroshima. Japan took the first game of the three game set 15-5 (AFP photo)

USOC kicks off money-for-medals programme

PARK CITY (AFP) — U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) officials handed out the first \$368,000 of an \$18 million programme aimed at improving medal chances at the 2002 Salt Lake Games.

The Podium 2002 plan will pay out \$3.5 million through the end of 1999, another \$4.5 million in 2000, \$6 million in 2001 and \$4 million in 2002.

The goal is to surpass the record U.S. total of 13 medals at a Winter Olympics when the Winter Games return to a U.S. city for the first time since 1980 in Lake Placid, New York.

A programme to open 2002 Olympics training venues early for U.S. athletes received the first \$150,000 toward a total investment of \$3.5 million.

The U.S. ski team received \$112,000 of more than \$4 million to enhance training opportunities, including a trip to Canada for extra training.

U.S. bobsledders received money for living expenses. This includes women, whose participation in the 2002 Games has not yet been approved.

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Carlton pull plug on Arsenal takeover talks

LONDON (AFP) — Media group Carlton Communications said Friday that it had called off talks with English Premiership champions and FA Cup holders Arsenal over a possible takeover bid for the London club.

The announcement followed press reports claiming that Arsenal were in negotiations with a rival group, United News and Media Company.

Carlton first announced it was in talks with the Gunners on September 10, just 24 hours after satellite broadcaster BSkyB unveiled its offer for rivals Manchester United.

No price for a Carlton bid was ever made public but it had been reported the group was considering making an offer of £275 million (\$440 million).

Earlier, the Daily Mirror claimed that the United News and Media Company

wants to control the club's television rights which could be worth tens of millions of pounds.

A spokesman for United News and Media, which owns the Express newspaper group and holds a stake in several television networks, denied that the company hoped to take control of Arsenal, but hinted that it was interested in forging a deal to broadcast matches.

"United's interest has always been in the acquisition of rights, not in the ownership of football clubs," he said.

BSkyB's bid for Manchester United was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission last month and a report is not due until March next year.

Czech fighting for life instead of title

HIROSHIMA (R) — Instead of fighting for the volleyball world championship, Vladimir Kovarik was left back in the Czech Republic fighting for his life — against leukemia.

But teams at these championships, which end November 29 in Tokyo, have not forgotten about Kovarik, joining in the battle by contributing portions of their prize money to help find a suitable donor for a bone marrow transplant.

After learning that Kovarik's health insurance would not cover the \$50,000 cost of locating a donor and life-saving operation, the volleyball community has come to the 27-year-old Czech's rescue.

Eliminated after the preliminary round, the Czechs donated \$3,500 of their \$5,000 winnings while the FIVB, volleyball's world governing body, has also made a "considerable donation" and called on the volleyball family to do the same.

"A promising career of a very gifted player has been tragically interrupted because of this illness," said Miloslav Djed, head of coaching development for the Czech Volleyball Federation. "We pray and hope with money we raise here that it will allow him to get better and play for his country again."

Having represented the Czech Republic at several European championships, Kovarik, father of two young sons who is married to a former javelin thrower, had been expected to provide leadership for a young team that was making its first appearance in the world championships as an independent nation.

Playing professionally since 1990, Kovarik's financial situation has been further complicated by a contract dispute with his last club Thessaloniki which he claims still owes him \$13,000 for last season.

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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

ports LOCAL SPORTS

Arab Games min committee concludes

— The Arab Ministerial Committee for the Arab Games recently concluded a two-day meeting to examine the progress of the games committee and to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year. The committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

Waldeh sets Arab

— Jordan's Arab Khawarizmi and Arab weight lifted 125 kg in the snatch. The record was set during the games committee's meeting. The games committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

tennis tourney ci

— Saudi Arabi and L. Under-12 Championship or Tennis Federation (ITF) in Jordan. The games committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

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SPORTS IN B

to host 2001 world

— IAAF has been chosen to host the 2001 World Championships. The games committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

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Furnished

— Furnished. The games committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

Independent

— Independent. The games committee is expected to meet again in the near future to discuss the games committee's report on the games committee's work during the last year.

LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



Pan-Arab Games ministerial committee concludes visit

AMMAN — The Arab Ministerial Committee of the 9th Pan-Arab Games recently left Amman for Egypt after a several-day visit to examine Jordan's preparations for the two-week games which will be held in the capital during August 1999. On Thursday the committee inspected Zarqa's JD4 million Prince Mohammad Sports City and its stadium with a capacity for 19,000 people. Earlier, the committee checked facilities at Amman's Al Hussein Youth City and Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid — the two main venues for the Games. The committee also visited Al Orthodoxy and Al Ahli clubs where some of the events will be held.

Khawaldeh sets Arab record

AMMAN — Jordan's Ayed Khawaldeh has registered two local and Arab weightlifting records when he achieved 112.5kg in the snatch and 140kg in the jerk. The records were set during a championship in Jerash organised by the Jordan Weightlifting Federation in preparation for the Aug. 15-31, 1999 Pan-Arab Games. In other categories, Ali Jahri set new Jordanian record when he set 130kg in the jerk and Awad Aboudi registered another local record when he snatched 150kg.

U-12 tennis tourney concludes

AMMAN — Samir Abu Taleh and Leen Irani were crowned Under-12 Championship organised by the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF). Federation President Mohammad Hamdan distributed medals and awards to the participants and honoured the two coaches supervising the training of age-groups. Khatem Hussein and Ahmad Oreibi.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

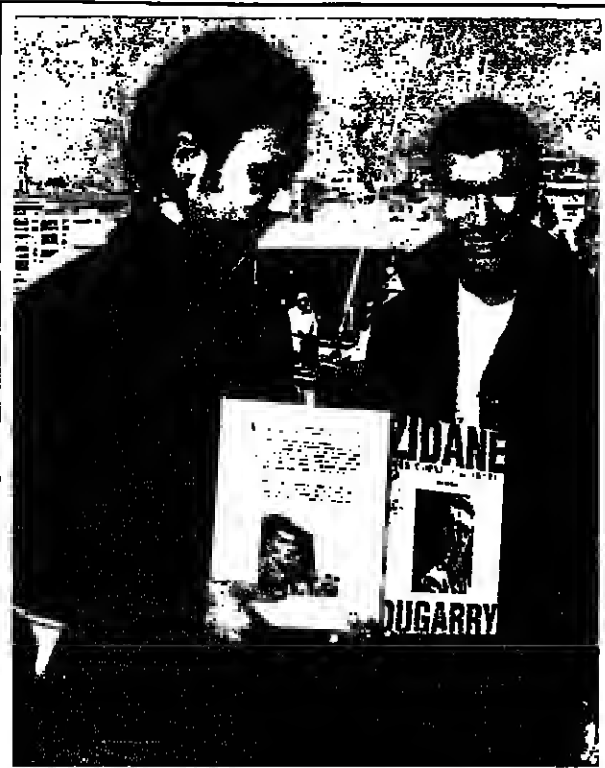
SPORTS IN BRIEF

Lisbon to host 2001 world indoors

MONACO (AFP) — Lisbon has been chosen as the venue for the 2001 World Indoor Athletics Championships. The Portuguese capital, announced as the winner here Thursday by the International Amateur Athletics Federation, beat off opposition from Budapest and Borlänge in Sweden. Portugal will also host the 2000 world cross country championships at Vilamoura.

Bordeaux move closer to Marseille

PARIS (AFP) — Bordeaux moved to within one point of French league leaders Marseille on Thursday following their 2-0 victory at Monaco. Lilian Laslandes hit the first goal and Johan Micoud got the second. Marseille could however, regain a four-point lead when they play at Lyon later on Friday. Beaten Monaco, meanwhile, remain in fourth spot. In the seventh minute, Monaco keeper Fabien Barthez looked comfortably positioned but failed to intercept a cross from the left and Laslandes was on hand to lodge the ball home. Then Micoud made it 2-0 with a superb lob after a clever one-two with Laslandes five minutes before the break.



French soccer players Zinedine Zidane (R) and Christophe Dugarry present a photo album showing 10 years of friendship and soccer in Marseille (AFP photo)

Slugger Sammy Sosa named National League MVP

NEW YORK (AFP) — Sammy Sosa may have fallen short in his epic home run chase with Mark McGwire, but the Chicago Cubs outfielder was named National League Most Valuable Player on Thursday.

Sosa was elected by the Baseball Writers Association of America, easily defeating McGwire, the St. Louis Cardinals first baseman who hit a major-league record 70 homers, four more than his rival and friend.

Sosa, 30, received 30 of the 32 first-place votes and was second on the two other ballots for 438 points. There are two voters from each NL city.

A native of the Dominican Republic, Sosa is part of an unprecedented sweep of the MVP honors by Latin players. Juan Gonzalez of the Texas Rangers, a native of Puerto Rico, won the AL award Wednesday. Sosa and Gonzalez both began their professional careers in 1986 with the Rangers' Gulf Coast affiliate in Sarasota, Florida.

The only other Dominican-born player to win an MVP was George Bell of Toronto, who was honoured in the American League in 1987.

McGwire received the remaining two first-place votes and 20 seconds for 272 points. Moises Alou of the Houston Astros was the

only other player listed on every ballot and was third with 215 points. Alou was followed by Greg Vaughn of the San Diego Padres (185 points) and Craig Biggio of Houston (163).

Sosa is the eighth Cub, the first since Andre Dawson in 1987, to be an NL MVP since the writers began voting on the honour in 1931.

Other winners for the franchise were Gabby Hartnett (1935), Phil Cavarretta (1945), Hank Sauer (1952), Ernie Banks (1958, 1959) and Ryne Sandberg (1984).

Both McGwire and Sosa shattered the previous mark of 61 homers set by Roger Maris in 1961, but it was Sosa who helped lead his team to the playoffs for the first time since 1989 as the Cubs captured the wild card.

Sosa drove in a major-league high 158 runs — 11 more than McGwire — for the fourth-highest RBI total in NL history. He hit 308 with 20 doubles and 18 stolen bases and also led the majors in runs scored (132) and total bases (414).

His 11 multi-homer games tied the major league single-season mark previously reached by Detroit's Hank Greenberg in 1938. He earned a \$250,000 bonus for winning the award.

Sosa set a major-league record for home runs in a month when he blasted 20 in June. In addition, Sosa

was outstanding over the last 110 games, amassing 57 homers and 124 RBI. Prior to May 25th, Sosa had just nine home runs while McGwire had already hit 24.

He was named to the NL All-Star team for the second time during his career, but did not play due to left shoulder stiffness.

Sosa's outgoing personality and extensive charity work made him a hero not only in the Latin community but to a legion of fans worldwide. He was wildly cheered while competing for a team of major league All-Stars during a tour of Japan earlier this month.

McGwire's chances were hurt by the disappointing season of the Cardinals, who finished 19 games back of Houston in the NL Central.

Acquired from Florida in the offseason, Alou led Houston to the division title. He had 38 home runs and 124 RBI while hitting .312 with 34 doubles.

Vaughn guided San Diego to its second National League West title in three years, hitting .272 with 50 homers, 119 RBI and 112 runs scored. Biggio hit .325 with 51 doubles and 50 stolen bases.

Sosa is the second Cubs player to win an award from the baseball writers this season. Pitcher Kerry Wood was named Rookie of the Year on November 9.

Al Davis after four games in 1989. He is 6-1 against his former team, including a 34-17 victory in week three.

The Raiders have been outscored 55-30 in the first quarter in games this season, a trend they'll need to reverse to have a chance against Denver.

Oakland has always been a special opponent for Denver coach Mike Shanahan, who was fired by Raiders owner

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Orleans in a division match-up.

The Broncos put their perfect 10-0 record on the line against AFC West division rivals Oakland.

Oakland has always been a special opponent for Denver coach Mike Shanahan, who was fired by Raiders owner

Green Bay's 25-game home winning streak.

Visions of Randall Cunningham hitting receivers Randy Moss, Cris Carter and Jake Reed at will are still dancing in the heads of the Packers defensive backs.

Cunningham scorched the Packer secondary for 442 yards and four touchdowns in Minnesota's convincing 37-24 victory at Green Bay back in week five.

The 442 yards were the most ever against the Packers. Cunningham surpassed the old mark of 411 yards, set in 1990 by Joe Montana of the San Francisco 49ers.

The trio of Moss, Carter and Reed were too much to handle for Packer cornerbacks Tyrone Williams and Craig Newsome. Moss used his 6-4 size to catch five passes for 190 yards, including touch-

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Tunisian club chase clean sweep of African titles

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Esperance of Tunisia will become the first club to lift the four African club titles if they defeat Premiero de Agosto of Angola in the Cup Winners Cup final.

The North Africans host the first leg on Saturday at the 50,000-seat Al-Menzah Stadium in Tunis with the return match on December 6 at the Citadela Stadium in Luanda.

Known as the Blood and Gold, Esperance finished runners-up to Gor Mahia of Kenya in the Cup Winners Cup before winning a stormy 1994 Champions Cup final against Zamalek of Egypt.

This success took the Tunisians into a Super Cup game with Cup Winners Cup holders Daring Club Motema Pembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo and they cruised to victory. Esperance added the African

Football Confederation (CAF) Cup to their list of honours last year with a narrow triumph over Petro Atletico, the first Angolan finalists in an African event.

Now the other great Luanda club, Premiero, stand between them and a place in history. The greater experience of the Tunisians makes them marginal favourites.

Esperance supplied five of the 1998 Tunisian World Cup squad — goalkeeper Chokri Al Ouair, defenders Khaled Badra and Tarek Thabet and midfielders Faycal Ben Ahmed and Sirajeddine Chihhi.

Al Ouair, ranked among the best goalkeepers at the 32-nation showpiece, Thabet and Chihhi played against England, Colombia and Romania and all have passed the 50-cap mark.

Injury prevented 1998 African Nations Cup star Hassen Gabsi being

in France and the recent return of the midfielder should ensure plenty of ammunition for leading scorers Sami Laroussi and Ziad Tlemcani.

Premiero have swept into the decider by winning six of eight matches and scoring 24 goals with Makala N'silulu, Francisco Vicente and Moises Arsenio finding the net consistently.

The military club provided six of the national squad beaten 1-0 in South Africa last month — defenders Antonio Neto, Juliao Kutonda and Helder Vicente and midfielders Francisco Vicente, Moises Almeida and Pedro Rodrigues.

Reaching the final marks a dramatic change in fortune after three previous appearances ended in first-round exits against modest central African opposition.

Austrian romps to World Cup giant slalom win

PARK CITY (AFP) — Nagano Olympics giant slalom runner-up Alexandra Meissnitzer overpowered World Cup opponents on the Salt Lake Games bill Thursday, serving notice she has no intention of settling for silver in 2002.

The 25-year-old Austrian was fastest in both runs to win the season's second women's alpine World Cup giant slalom by 2.16 seconds over reigning World Cup G-S champion Martina Ertl of Germany.

"It's a big goal, 2002, no question. I would like to go for a gold," Meissnitzer said. "I really like the hill here. It's something special to win here."

Meissnitzer's total time of two minutes, 18.13 seconds came from a first run of 1:05.48 and a second in 1:12.65 and after a week a training where she spent little time working on the event.

"When I was skiing down, I thought, 'This is not bad. I didn't think it was enough for a win,'" she said. "I was bappy with my first run and thought, 'I don't want to give it away.'"

Dark clouds and snow dimmed visibility in the second run down the 1,158-metre course, which has a vertical drop of 368 metres. But the sun broke through in the midst of Meissnitzer's winning final run.

"It's a big surprise I was more than two seconds ahead," she said. "I think I was the lucky one in the second run. I had great visibility. The sun was just coming out. That's why I won by more than two seconds."

"The slope was getting harder and that's what I like. I thought if I want to win I have to risk everything. And I did. It was not a perfect run but it was a great run."

Meissnitzer, second here a year ago and second in last month's World Cup opener at Austria, won her fourth World Cup race, the first since a giant slalom at Crans Montana last season.

She took a \$37,500 top prize and a 180-129 World Cup points lead over Norway's Andrine Flemmer after two races but wasn't optimistic about taking the overall season title.

"I don't think I have a real chance," she said. "If I win Super G and downhill, I might have a chance. If I'm just counting points, I'm not skiing as well as that right now."

Flemmer, a surprise winner in last month's opener, was ninth here. Meissnitzer denied Ertl, the 1994 Olympic giant slalom runner-up, her 13th World Cup victory.

Ertl, fourth at Nagano in the slalom and giant slalom, is a contender for the overall title.

"I have to stay in good shape and not be injured," Ertl said. "A lot of people are expect-

ing something. Me too."

Switzerland's Sonja Nef and Austria's Karin Koelliker, second and fourth after the first run, fell while on pace to grab the lead.

That allowed Birgit Heeb of Liechtenstein to rise from ninth and take third in 2:20.39 for her first World Cup podium. Her best prior finishes were fourth here and at Vail last season and fifth here in 1995.

"I don't know why I ski so well here," Heeb said. "The course is much like the runs at home. Now I hope to show on race days what I'm doing in training."

Croatia's Janica Kostelic finished fourth after placing 21st in the opening run, rallying in tricky conditions with the second-fastest second run at 1:13.69.

Reigning world and Olympic champion Deborah Compagnoni of Italy went from first here last year to first on this time, clipping a gate and skiing off course on the third run of the day.

Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg, the 1997 World Cup overall champion, was 19th. The Nagano Olympic downhill silver medalist missed last month's opener after suffering a head injury in training.

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Palestinian prisoners set free to little joy

NAHAL OZ (R) — There was little joy and a lot of anger in Gaza on Friday.

An Israeli release of Palestinian prisoners is usually cause for celebration in their hometowns, a signal to the Palestinian street that peacemaking with Israel is bearing fruit.

On Friday, only a handful of the 250 freed inmates got a warm welcome. Israel said 100 of those released under a new peace deal with the Palestinians were political detainees.

The rest had been arrested either for common crimes or for entering Israel without a permit, angering Palestinian officials who had expected the release of political prisoners.

"You'd better lock your cars because they're all car thieves," one Israeli policeman told reporters only half jokingly at the Nahal Oz crossing into Gaza.

A group of 65 prisoners arrived at the crossing, but on the Palestinian side of the transit point only a few people were on hand to receive the buses in a show of protest.

One man freed, 22-year-old Rami Barka, said he had been due out of jail on Friday anyway after serving six months for entering Israel without a permit. "This is ridiculous," he said.

Hani Al Zawara was released from Beersheba prison only 20 days before the end of an 18-month term for the same offence.

"I would have preferred if Israel had released those who were serving harsh sentences," Zawara, 25, said.

Palestinian families denounced negotiators for not pushing to ensure the

release of more prisoners held for political offences such as carrying out attacks on Israel.

For its part, Israel insisted it would release no one with "blood on his hands."

Palestinian officials also stayed away from the homecomings in Gaza and near Ramallah and Hebron in the West Bank.

"Whoever thinks we're happy is insane," said Hisham Abdul Razek, the main Palestinian negotiator on the issue.

"I won't come to attend this shameful act, this is disappointing for Palestinians. Israel is violating the agreement. The U.S. should immediately intervene to stop Israeli non-compliance with the agreement," he said.

Israel agreed under the land-for-security deal signed at the White House last month to free 750 prisoners in three stages over 12 weeks.

Israel also began banding over 500 square kilometres of land to Palestinian rule on Friday — but that was in the West Bank.

Ahmad Obaid, a 33-year-old member of the Palestine Liberation Front who was sentenced to life imprisonment, was one of only 16 political detainees released at Nahal Oz.

He was also one of the few to be embraced and kissed by a family member, though the warm greeting was not planned.

His brother, a cameraman for a Qatari television station, was filming the prisoners' release when he suddenly realised he was looking at his brother through the lens.



A Palestinian woman dances as she greets a convoy of Israeli buses carrying Palestinian prisoners to be released outside an Israeli army camp, near the West Bank town of Ramallah on Friday. Israel began withdrawing troops and releasing prisoners as part of the implementation of the Wye agreement (AP photo)

Obaid, accused of carrying out an armed attack on Israeli soldiers in 1987, said he had mixed feelings.

"I am happy because I was released but sad for the many that remain in Israeli jails," he said. Later, his family gave him a warm

welcome. His mother danced around their house in Jahalya refugee camp while women friends and family ululated.

About 50 family members of political detainees arrived at the crossing only to learn their loved ones were not

coming home. Mothers wept. Several women fainted.

A wailing Salmeh Abu Saadeh, whose son is serving a life sentence, said: "It is a sin that criminals are released and our struggling sons remain inside."

'Iraq moved sensitive equipment ahead of feared bombing'

UNITED NATIONS (AFP)

— Iraq moved sensitive equipment which had been under camera surveillance during the absence of U.N. arms experts, fearing impending U.S. air strikes, Iraqi and U.N. officials said Thursday.

But the officials told AFP that the equipment was being moved back following the resumption of Iraqi cooperation with the U.N. weapons inspectors on Tuesday.

U.N. officials said that equipment which had been under U.N. camera surveillance, such as machine tools that might have a military application in addition to a civilian purpose, had been moved by the Iraqis.

Some dual use equipment had been placed under sandbags, placing it out of range of the cameras keeping it under surveillance, an official said.

However Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun told AFP that "they're back now," referring to the items moved after the U.N. weapons inspectors pulled out on Nov. 11 amid a mounting threat of U.S. air strikes.

The camera surveillance at hundreds of sites throughout Iraq aims to ensure that Iraq does not reconstitute weapons of mass destruction programmes.

Hamdoun stressed that the equipment was moved "only during the time when the prospects of the military strike were clear."

U.N. officials also played down the incidents, noting that Iraq took similar action a year ago during the last crisis over U.N. weapons inspections.

"It's not a problem," one U.N. expert said.

The U.N. inspectors returned to Iraq on Tuesday, and resumed operations on Wednesday, described as "housekeeping" by one U.N. official.

The top U.N. weapons inspector, Richard Butler, told a news conference on Thursday that it would take "three or four weeks" before the U.N. inspectors would resume intrusive inspections to check Iraqi disarmament of weapons of mass destruction.

He said that he had written three letters since Tuesday to Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to demand documents previously withheld by Iraq concerning Iraqi chemical and biological programmes.

But he had not yet had a reply, Butler added.

Asked about the time frame he had given Aziz for a reply, Butler said: "I used a very simple word: Now."

Butler also denied that he intended to resign, accusing Iraq of attempting to divert attention from the disarmament process by continuing to demand the restructuring of his U.N. Special Commission and his resignation. A U.N. official said that the Australian diplomat was "untouchable" because of the current situation.

Artist fined for damaging urinal

TARASCON (AFP) — French artist Pierre Pinoncelli was fined nearly \$53,500 on Friday for damaging a porcelain urinal that was the work of Marcel Duchamp, a figure of the early 20th century avant-garde artistic movement. Pinoncelli was prosecuted on a complaint by the culture ministry after urinating in the urinal and hitting it with a hammer at an exhibition in Nîmes, southern France, in 1993. A court here ordered the artist to pay 250,000 francs to an insurance company and 20,000 francs to the state in the person of Culture Minister Catherine Trautmann. He must also pay 16,336 francs for repairs and 10,000 francs in costs.

Ancient cloak swapped with fake

AREQUIPA (R) — A museum that plumed itself on possessing a pre-Columbian parrot-feather cloak has found that someone took off with the \$100,000 ceremonial garment and covered the crime up with a chicken-feather substitute. Curators said they did not know when the cloak — made from more than 560 parrot feathers and dating to between 700 and 1200 — was stolen from the municipal museum in the southern city of Arequipa. The theft was discovered this week after museum officials noticed that the 1.8-metre-long cloak's blue and yellow plumage had lost its usual shine.

Annual Sexpo event expected to draw 70,000

MELBOURNE (R) — Whips, handcuffs, vibrators and erotic dancing had Australians contemplating their secret desires at a risqué sex exhibition. Body painting and sex toys also helped lure a crowd of thousands who arrived early and cast aside inhibitions to participate in the opening day of Australia's annual Sexpo event. Almost 40,000 people attended the four-day event last year and organisers expect 70,000 people to turn up this year.

Woofie reprieved as Bardot files in

EDINBURGH (Agencies) — Woofie, the postman-chasing dog, was reprieved from sentence of death on Friday after an international campaign to save the little collie headed by French former screen siren Brigitte Bardot. Woofie was ordered to be destroyed in September after her owners pleaded guilty to dangerous behaviour in the hope of winning a lenient sentence, but the authorities said the dog must be put down. The court of session overturned the verdict of a lower court, and decided that Woofie should not die after all. Bardot denounced the law as a "stupid" one and said: "Judges should concern themselves with murders and assassins."

Julie Andrews may not sing again

NEW YORK (AFP) — Acclaimed actress and singer Julie Andrews may never sing again because her voice has not recovered from throat surgery a year ago, according to the weekly magazine Parade. "I don't think she'll ever sing again," the Sunday newspaper supplement quoted Andrews' husband, producer Blake Edwards in its upcoming edition. "It's an absolute tragedy," Edwards said, adding that his wife's voice grew weaker every day. "If you heard it, you'd weep." Andrews, 63, best-known for her roles in films "The Sound of Music" and "Mary Poppins," came down with vocal problems during a Broadway revival of the musical "Victor/Victoria" three years ago.

Taleban: Ben Laden innocent, welcome in Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban authorities said Friday that Osama Ben Laden was innocent of all terrorist charges and that the dissident Saudi billionaire would remain a welcome guest in Afghanistan.

Taleban spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmaen said the militia's supreme court had cleared Ben Laden of U.S. allegations that he was responsible for the Aug. 7 bombings of two U.S. embassies in east Africa, killing 224 people.

"Since we had set a deadline for evidence to be advanced to prove Osama's involvement in the Kenya and Tanzania bombings, and since nobody was able

to set forth any evidence... he has been cleared," he told AFP.

"He can live in Afghanistan as a Muslim guest but the ban on his political and military activities is still in force," Mutmaen said.

The Taleban's supreme court had set a Nov. 20 deadline which expires at 1930 GMT Friday for Washington to provide evidence in support of its charges against its self-proclaimed number one enemy.

The U.S. government has indicted Ben Laden and posted a five million dollar reward for his arrest and capture.

Mutmaen said now that

Ben Laden had been cleared "the world should reconsider and should not criticise him."

"Nobody can accuse or criticise him because there was no evidence to prove his sins and involvement in terrorist activities," he added.

He also lashed out at the Aug. 20 U.S. missile strike on suspected Ben Laden training bases in the Afghan province of Khost, saying the reasoning behind the attack was now baseless.

That strike left an official death toll of 24 and was launched with a simultaneous attack on a chemical factory in the Sudan which Washington suspects was

producing agents for nerve gas.

"Any action like the U.S. cruise attack is tyranny and treason," he said.

Sources say Ben Laden is understood to be still living in the Taleban's southern de facto capital of Kandahar where he owns two houses and holds strong personal ties with the militia's supreme leader, Mulla Mohammad Omar.

Under Omar's orders the supreme court was last month assigned the task of assessing any evidence against Ben Laden in line with Islamic Sharia law.

However, Taleban authorities have complained that Washington was less than

receptive to Taleban plans to try Ben Laden under local law.

Washington has argued that because the U.S. does not recognise the Taleban as the legitimate government in Afghanistan, it holds no extradition treaty, nor formal diplomatic ties and Ben Laden should be held for trial in the U.S.

The Sunni Muslim activist Taleban control around 80 per cent of Afghanistan, but Afghanistan's seat at the United Nations is still held by the deposed government of former president Burhanuddin Rabbani who was driven out of Kabul by the militia in September 1996.

Turk drive for Ocalan clouds EU ties

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's harsh condemnations of Italy over Kurdish PKK chief Abdullah Ocalan reflect a robust new foreign policy used successfully against Syria, but applied with risks for the first time against a European ally.

Friday's apparent rejection of Turkey's extradition request, far from settling the issue, will raise Turkish-Italian tensions to a new level. Passions are already running high with business boycotts being organised and media bellowing contempt for Rome.

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz gave notice in parliament this week he would view such a decision as tantamount to connivance in mass murder. In that he was applauded by friends and rivals.

Support easily won at home could exact a price abroad.

"It is clear Turkish-Italian ties and, further, relations with the EU may be sacrificed," commentator Cengiz Candar wrote in Sabah newspaper.

"Hostility to Europe may well rise now to a huge degree." Animosity had

already infected personal ties. Yilmaz brushed aside a proposal by his Italian counterpart that they meet at a soccer match between Galatasaray and Juventus in Istanbul. "If he wants to talk, let him come to Ankara," he said.

The show of pique reflects popular anger over the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and a brutal conflict that has cost 30,000 lives, virtually laid waste to large areas of the southeast and cost billions of dollars.

Emotions can too often translate into bad diplomacy. "What Turkish foreign policy often fails to do is to recognise the wider consequences of an action for its national interests," one Western diplomat said.

The arrest of Ocalan should have been a triumph for Ankara.

"But instead of making a virtue of it, they immediately drove up the barometer and turned it into a damaging row with an ally," she added. "Turkey is a sophisticated country with a strong case. With more subtlety here it could achieve more."

Turkey has cause for disappointment over NATO allies'

less than outspoken condemnation of Ocalan. London and Washington have backed extradition. Others have been taciturn.

Worse still, Ankara labours now in the knowledge it drove Ocalan out of hiding into the spotlight where he now offers himself to a curious world, reborn, as peace-maker.

All this may be galling to the extreme for Ankara but, in the eyes of many diplomats, all the more reason for cool reason.

Turkey sees things differently. A matter of months ago it might have held its peace and waited, but Turkish foreign policy these days pays less heed to the sensitivities of Europeans.

Turkey reached something of a turning point last year, cutting many EU contacts when excluded from states to be embraced by eastward expansion.

Yilmaz, in a turn of phrase that will long be remembered on the Rhine, compared Bonn's policy on eastward expansion with that of Adolf Hitler's "Lebensraum" campaign of conquest.

Turkey's new policy,

inspired by an influential military, faced its first big test late this summer. To the scarcely concealed dismay of NATO allies, Ankara threatened force against Damascus if it did not drive Ocalan from Syrian soil and close bases Turkey said the PKK used for raids into the southeast.

The threats, as this week, were accompanied by a ferocious press campaign. Warnings of air strikes, even war, resounded.

It was a gamble that worked. Syria crumbled. Ocalan fled via Moscow to Rome. Public expectations ratcheted so high by press and politicians were met, but it was arguably a close-run thing.

Turkey issued a similar but little noted threat against Baghdad over the PKK weeks later. When Ocalan appeared in Moscow, it was Russia's embassy that suffered intense daily pressure.

Ankara will use economic weapons where it sees fit. Senior officials said Turkey had advised its state oil refinery to limit purchases from petroleum giants BP and Amoco because of reluctance to back the trans-Turkey

Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

The first application of Turkey's more assertive policy on an ally, Italy, might be less successful than the Syrian affair.

Judicial barriers to extradition, such as the formal existence of the death penalty in Turkey, are more likely to prove insurmountable if political goodwill evaporates. But Turkey, perhaps, already sensed Ocalan slipping away.

Politicians and the generals behind them may be tempted to seek a channel for the force of unfulfilled popular hopes. "If the outcome cannot be declared a victory, we feel they [Ankara] will launch a nationalist backlash against Europe," Candar wrote.

The EU, so far, insists the "Ocalan crisis" is a bilateral affair between Italy and Turkey. But Rome could look to fellow members for backing if the dispute continues to escalate. "The point is that if you want to join a golf club, you don't go around slugging off the members," one diplomat said.

U.N. inspectors work, Iraqis enjoy weekend break

(Continued from page 1)

But others expressed concern at the American presence in the Gulf and its threat to strike without warning if Iraq breaks its pledge of cooperation.

Abdul Razak Al Saadi, preaching at the 14th of Ramadan Mosque, urged other Arab nations to "stand by Iraq and tell America that we will not allow this oppression and aggression to continue."

Meanwhile, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoun, told the London-based Sharq Al Awsat newspaper that "it is not unlikely for the crisis to erupt again."

He suggested the United States would try to provoke the Baghdad regime, but he said the Iraqi government was "keen on warding off a crisis because we want the comprehensive

review to take place as soon as possible."

Iraq hopes that a promised "comprehensive review" of its progress on disarmament will lead to an easing or lifting of the sanctions, which have limited oil sales and crippled the economy.

However, the deputy U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Peter Burleigh, has said the United States does not see the review as leading automatically to the lifting of sanctions.

Neither Iraq nor UNSCOM has been saying much since the inspections resumed. Charles Duelfer, deputy director of UNSCOM, told the Associated Press in a telephone interview from New York on Thursday that this was intentional.

"We're coming out of a crisis," Duelfer said. "We're trying to keep the temperature down as much as possible."

Handwritten signature or mark in Arabic script.